







THE
ANATOMY OF ATHEISM

AS DEMONSTRATED IN THE
LIGHT OF THE CONSTITUTION
AND LAWS OF NATURE

BY
REV. H. H. MOORE, D. D.

"The laws of nature are the thoughts of God."

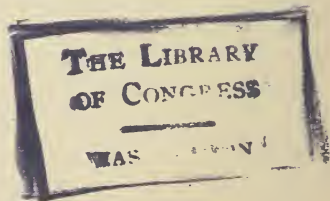
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DEDICATION.

To my Son, Homer A. Moore.

Though your profession is that of music, yet such is your love
and aptitude for philosophical studies, that

I take pleasure in

Dedicating to you this Volume,

feeling assured that you are able to master its contents
and defend them.

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

THE volume herewith given to the public originated in a very simple manner. In conversation with a clergyman concerning the papers which the Hon. W. E. Gladstone, Dr. Field, and Cardinal Manning, on the one side, and R. G. Ingersoll on the other, had given to the public on the subject of religion, the writer remarked:

“I have not read the papers. They must be very able.”

“Yes, they are; and Dr. ——— says he does not think that Ingersoll is answered, and that he does not see how he can be.”

This conversation started in the mind of the author a ripple of thought, which, for some months, has rolled on, gathering such force as it could by the way, and now it returns to equilibrium in these few prefatory remarks.

Infidel arguments, it matters not how old they may be, if presented in a new dress should receive such attention as the spirit of the times may demand. The task we undertook to perform was somewhat difficult. It was important

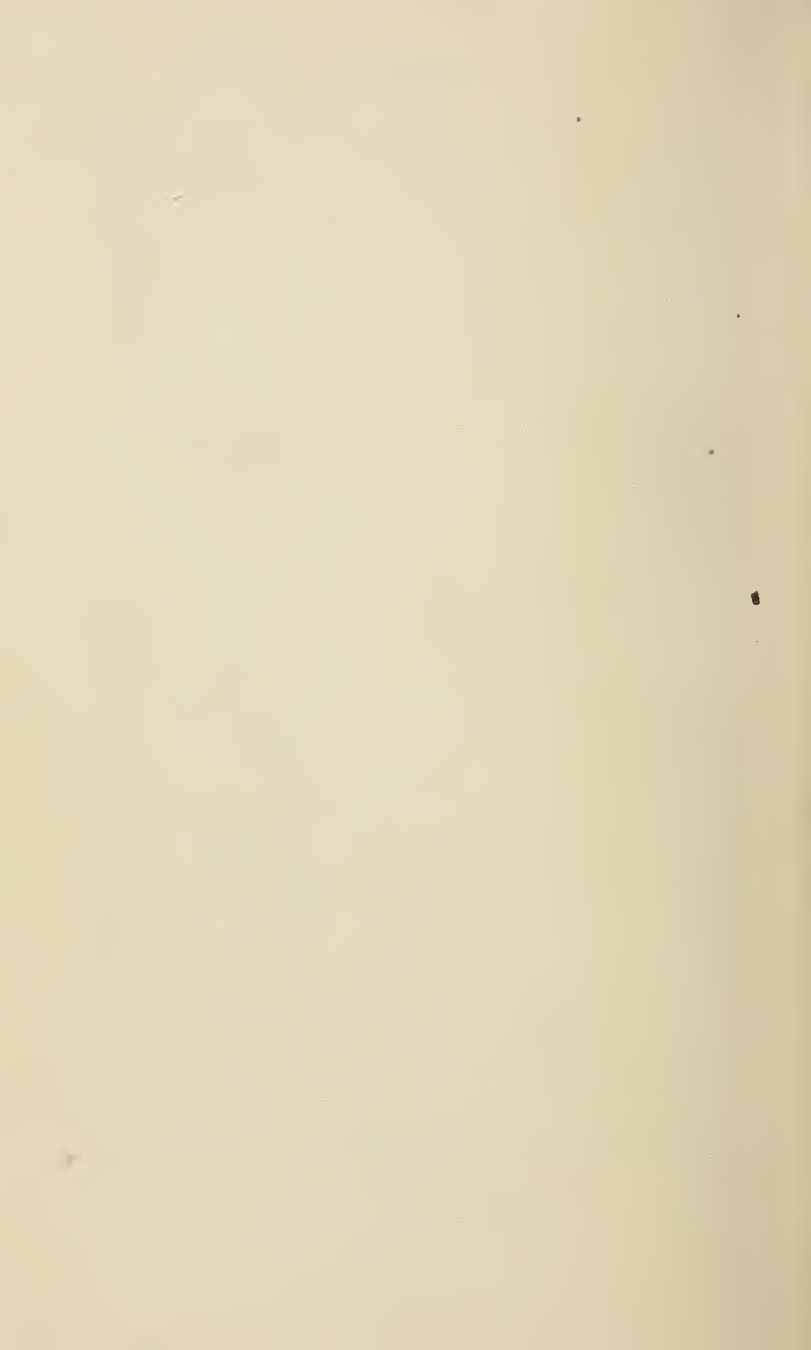
that we keep in sight of the game we were pursuing, or, at least, keep on its sinuous and meandering track, and, at the same time, put in logical order a thread of argument for the defense of the faith of our fathers. Could we have found in our library even the main reasons for accepting Christ as our Messiah, here spread before the reader, this volume would not have appeared. We have kept constantly before us the average reader who would likely be interested in such subjects, and have written for the express purpose of rendering him some assistance in his troubles.

Believing that Christianity is an embodiment of truth, infidel attacks upon it give us no anxiety. It is not desirable that religion should ever settle down into the calmness of a sea of molten lead; for then it might cease to be a matter of interest to anybody. Rather let the agitation go on, even though it rise to a storm; for all we care for is, as is possible, to be masters of the situation. This battle has already been fought a thousand times, and a thousand more fields may witness a renewal of the struggle. What matter is, as a reality, in the physical world, truth is in the intellectual, and neither

can be annihilated. Our task would have been easier could we have presented our argument as an independent line of thought; but we could not avoid bearding the lion in his den without awakening suspicion that we feared a close conflict. In the attention we have given to government by law, and the problem of evil, the stronghold of Atheism has received our most respectful attention. We have expressed our own views, given to nature our own interpretation, and have not always shown the highest regard for the beaten track or for great names. Some of our positions will challenge attack, and the sooner and more thoroughly that which is unsound is swept away the better. Our argument, in some of its main features, has not, as far as we know, been worked out before, and if we are not mistaken it gives a breadth and conclusiveness to the proofs for Christianity which can not be reached by any other course. Of this, however, the public must be the judge. We invite criticism; and if truth shall be the tools used, we care not how keen their edge.

THE AUTHOR.

ST. PETERSBURG, PA., May, 1889.



CONTENTS.

INTRODUCTION,	Pages 21-31
-------------------------	-------------

CHAPTER I.

INCIDENTAL CAUSES WHICH LEAD TO ATHEISM.

1. The Affirmative Elements of Infidelity have never been put into Logical Form.
2. The Tendency of Humanity, in all Ages, has been to Worship.
3. The Experiences of Dr. John Tyndall with Atheism.
4. How Baron von Humboldt may have drifted into Atheism.
5. The Value of Humboldt's Experience as a Basis of Infidelity for Others.
6. The Religious Faculty in Man Susceptible of either Growth or Extinction.
7. The Absence of Affirmative Principles at the Base of Infidelity Fatal to its Claims.
8. Materialism necessarily leads to Atheism.
9. Origin of the Pantheism of Spinoza.
10. The Agnosticism of Herbert Spencer.
11. The Helps and Hindrances to Faith.

Pages, 33-45

CHAPTER II.

R. G. INGERSOLL, THE ACCREDITED CHAMPION OF INFIDELITY.

1. His Infidelity primarily vested in Himself.
2. The Peculiar Characteristics of the Man.
3. A Series of Perversions of Scripture and Nature lead to Atheism.
4. The Miscellaneous Character of His Acquisitions.
5. Personal Disqualifications to appreciate Religion.

6. Personal Characteristics of the Skeptic.
7. The Intellectual a Secondary Power in the Man.
8. He can form no Idea of Faith as a Religious Element.
Pages, 46-58

CHAPTER III.

THE INSUFFICIENCY OF THE FACTS PRODUCED AS A SUPPORT TO INFIDELITY.

1. Invective as a Substitute for Argument.
2. The Skeptic's Conception of the World we live in.
3. Indulgence the Skeptic's only Conception of Government.
4. The Ideal God whose Existence the Infidel could admit.
5. The Vain Struggles of the Infidel to satisfy Himself.
6. Nature and Revelation objected to on the Same Grounds.
7. The Relation God sustains to the Universe.
8. Superficial Conceptions of Nature.
Pages, 59-71

CHAPTER IV.

THE VALUE OF INFIDEL ARGUMENTS CONSIDERED.

1. The Personal Relation of the Infidel to Religion.
2. The Value of Subjective Arguments against Religion.
3. Arguments which might be legitimately urged by Infidels
are neglected.
4. If Ingersoll is a Model Man, Christianity must be False.
5. The Mental Characteristics needed in this Discussion.
6. Bold Assertions not to be substituted for Candid Con-
victions.
7. In the Absence of Principle, the Argument varies with the
Changing Moods of the Skeptic.
Pages, 72-84

CHAPTER V.

THE IDENTITY OF THE ARGUMENT AGAINST CHRISTIANITY AND PAGANISM.

1. The Position of the Atheist stated
2. In this System of Atheism Objections to the Bible occupy a
Secondary Place.

3. The Infidel's Conception of what the Creator and Governor of the World would be did One exist.
 4. Atheism the Outcome of Paganish Conceptions of God.
 5. The Death-blow to Polytheism.
 6. The Real Battle-ground of Modern Atheism.
 7. In the Basis of this Infidelity there is Nothing New or Strange.
 8. The Observed Facts of Nature should be interpreted in the Light of its Constitution.
- Pages, 85-98

CHAPTER VI.

A FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF ATHEISTIC THOUGHT.

1. Nature primarily the Basis of Infidelity.
 2. Atheism is a Misconception of the Facts of Nature.
 3. A Misconception of Providence tends to Atheism.
 4. As the Constitution of Nature is perfect, it will not admit of Change.
- Pages, 99-111

CHAPTER VII.

THE CORRECT INTERPRETATION OF NATURE DISSIPATES ATHEISM.

1. The Constitution of Matter.
 2. The Perfection of Matter demonstrated.
 3. Apparent Evils may be an Absolute Good.
 4. Matter *per se* the Source of Energy.
 5. The Existence of a Universe of Things does not infringe upon the Being of God, but serves as a Revelation of His Power and Godhead.
- Pages, 112-124

CHAPTER VIII.

NATURE'S INTERPRETATION OF ITSELF IS NOT ATHEISTIC.

1. The Skeptic avoids discussing the Constitution of Nature.
2. Nature affords Proof that its Structure is Constitutional.
3. Any Collision of Parts with the Fixed Elements of the Constitution of Nature causes Confusion and Trouble.

4. Atheism can exist only in the Absence of Law and Government.
5. In the Constitution of Nature Necessary Facts occupy a Conspicuous Place.
6. The Excellency of the Constitution of Nature is seen in the Fact that Obedience to her Laws secures the Highest Good.

Pages, 125-136

CHAPTER IX.

THE TESTIMONY OF NATURE TO THE REIGN OF LAW.

1. God reveals Himself through Nature to his Creatures.
2. The Substance of Nature is composed of Various Elements.
3. The Constitution of Nature is an Expression of the Divine Will.
4. Benevolence occupies a Conspicuous Place in the Divine Plan.
5. The Designs of Infinite Wisdom may be seen in the Reign of Law.
6. The Operations of a Law of Nature have been modified for the General Good.
7. The Plan devised for furnishing the Earth with a Suitable Atmosphere indicates Design and Benevolence.

Pages, 137-149

CHAPTER X.

THE MISERIES OF CRIME PROCLAIM A MORAL GOVERNOR OF THE WORLD.

1. It is conceded that this is a Degenerate World.
2. It is Desirable, Fit, and Becoming that Misery should be the Attendant upon Crime.
3. As a Part of the Structure of the Universe, the Consequences of Virtue and Vice are Matters of Necessity.
4. Happiness and Misery, in their Completeness, are not Subject to the Control of their Environments.
5. Virtue in this World by no Means exempts its Possessor from its Calamities.

6. All Things considered, Creation was a Dictate of Wisdom.
 7. The Ingress of Evil into the World.
 8. The Problem of Moral Evil.
 9. The Creator's Verdict upon His Own Work is that it is
"Good."
 10. The Problem of Hell.
- Pages, 150-162

CHAPTER XI.

THE PROBLEM OF THE SUFFERING OF THE INNOCENT.

1. A Glad Recognition of a Truth expressed by the Skeptic.
 2. The Problem of Animal Life.
 3. The Essence of Substance is in no Case Subject to Observation.
 4. The Problem of Animal Food.
 5. Broad Views of the Universe dissipate Trivial Objections.
 6. Virtue may be the Occasion or Cause of Suffering.
 7. The Mind is disciplined and developed by Toil and Suffering.
 8. Apparent Evils may be Real Blessings.
- Pages, 163-178

CHAPTER XII.

LAW COMMENSURATE WITH THE VASTNESS OF THE UNIVERSE.

1. The Relation of the Creator to the Created surpasses Human Comprehension.
 2. In the Reign of Law we see Transcendental Intelligence, Design, and Power; and these unerringly suggest a Divine Personality.
 3. Law pertains as rigidly to the Formation of Character as to Government of the Heavens.
 4. Apparent Irregularities imply no Suspension of Law.
 5. Law is an Incorporation of Infinite Intelligence and Design.
 6. Man, as an Intelligence, made to appreciate Intelligence in Nature.
- Pages, 179-192

CHAPTER XIII.

INFIDELITY GENERATED BY A PERVERSE SPIRIT.

1. The One Advantage the Skeptic possesses in this Discussion.
2. The Infidel's Low Conception of Man places him below the Plane of Religion.
3. A True and Elevated Conception of Man Essential to a Correct Understanding of Religion.
4. The Conscience is an Oracle in the Moral World.
5. Sacrifice is an Element of the Constitution of Nature.
6. The Infinite Creator occupies a Realm all His Own, as He Only is Divine.

Pages, 193-205

CHAPTER XIV.

ATHEISM IS INTRENCHED IN THE DOCTRINE OF NECESSITY.

1. Atheism denies the Doctrine of Man's Free Agency.
2. Materialistic Philosophy embraces the Idea of Necessity.
3. The Freedom of the Human Will.
4. The Doctrine of Necessity expounded.
5. The Doctrine of Necessity can be clearly seen only in its Application.
6. The Doctrine of Necessity has as thoroughly corrupted Theology as Philosophy.

Pages, 206-219

CHAPTER XV.

THEOLOGY HAS BEEN VITIATED BY THE DOCTRINE OF NECESSITY.

1. Theology has suffered from its Alliance with Philosophy.
2. Theological Necessity logically leads to Atheism.
3. The Doctrine of Necessity is the Same, though it may spring from Different Roots.
4. The Wonder is that Any Man can be a Fatalist and a Christian.
5. Fatalism is rooted in Idealistic, Materialistic, and Theological Philosophy.
6. Idealism refuted.

Pages, 220-234

CHAPTER XVI.

THE DOCTRINE OF NECESSITY OVERTHROWN BY MAN'S FREE AGENCY.

1. The Different Roots of the Doctrine of Necessity.
2. The Ground of Human Responsibility.
3. There can be no Escape from the Moral Government of God.
4. The Different Powers or Departments of the Mind.
5. The Relation of Motives to the Mind.
6. The Mind is a Source of Energy.
7. The Aspect of Government from the Stand-point of Free-will.
8. Should the Hazards of Possible Sin have been taken and Man created?

Pages, 235-248

CHAPTER XVII.

HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY FURTHER CONSIDERED.

1. The Argument stated.
2. The Basal Elements of Man's Accountability.
3. The Nature of Virtue.
4. The Futile Discussion of the Will with a False Psychology.
5. The Calamities of a Bad Education.

Pages, 249-262

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE POWER OF CHARACTER IN THE MORAL WORLD.

1. Man as seen from the Stand-point of Necessity.
2. Moral Law in the Spiritual Kingdom.
3. The Mind's Capacity for Joy and Woe.
4. Truth is obscured by the Present Mixed Condition of Things.
5. The Union of Liberty and Law in the Formation of Character.
6. The Harmony of the Bible and Philosophy in Regard to Character.
7. The Outcome of Character regarded as Consequences, not Rewards and Punishments.
8. One Ground of Necessity no Better than Another.
9. The Individuality and Independence of Man.

Pages, 263-276

CHAPTER XIX.

INFIDELITY AS THE OUTCOME OF THE PERVERSIONS AND MIS-
INTERPRETATIONS OF SCRIPTURE.

1. They best understand the Bible who live the Life it describes.
2. The Ignorance and Bad Conduct of Men, Infidels substitute for Christianity.
3. Faith, the Root-principle of Religion, they falsely represent as the Cause of Persecution.
4. In the Absence of Argument, Religion is caricatured.
5. The Warnings given to the Jews of the Consequences of Idolatry are represented as Causeless Curses.
6. In its Attempts to pervert Scripture, Infidelity makes Itself Silly.
7. The Real Questions embraced in Christianity are often misapprehended.
8. A False Philosophy is Sure to pervert Religious Truth.
9. Infidelity utterly fails to grasp the Higher Elements of the Mind.

Pages, 277-290

CHAPTER XX.

THE IDENTITY OF NATURAL AND REVEALED RELIGION.

1. Nature and the Bible as Different Witnesses.
2. The Use Christ, as a Teacher, made of Nature.
3. The Validity of this Reasoning admitted by the Skeptic.
4. Nature considered as a Revelation.
5. The Testimony of the Two Witnesses Important only where They touch the Same Subject.
6. Nature's Testimony More than its Analogy to Religion.

Pages, 291-302

CHAPTER XXI.

THE AGREEMENT OF NATURE AND REVELATION AS WITNESSES
TO THE SAME TRUTH.

1. A Lament for the Fate of the Skeptic.
2. Religion can be understood only as we give to Nature and the Bible the Broadest Interpretations.

3. The Harmony of Nature and Revelation in the Testimony They give in Regard to the Nature and Destiny of Man.
 4. The Constitution of Nature embodies within Itself the Wisdom and Energy and Benevolence of God, which afterwards, in Written Form, found Expression in the Word.
- Pages, 303-316

CHAPTER XXII.

THE OLD TESTAMENT.

1. To Modern Eyes Obscurity rests upon All Antiquity.
 2. Nations incorporate the Spirit of their Times in their Works.
 3. The Origin of the Jewish Nation one of the best Authenticated Facts of History.
 4. The Condition of the Hebrew Mind at the Time of the Exodus.
 5. The Policy pursued by Moses for the Elevation of this People.
 6. The Significance of Mount Sinai.
 7. The Decalogue.
 8. The Abrahamic Covenant.
- Pages, 317-332

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE CHURCH, THEOLOGY, OR RELIGION?

1. The Indefinite Aim of Infidel Warfare.
 2. The Proper Relation of Church, Theology, and Religion to Each Other.
 3. Theology as distinguished from the Gospel.
 4. Theology, in the Form of Philosophy, loses its True Character.
 5. Theology should be kept within its Own Sacred Limits.
 6. The Relation of Theology to Philosophy.
 7. What may be learned from the Experience of the Past.
- Pages, 333-348

CONCLUSION, Pages, 349-361

ANATOMY OF ATHEISM.

"Then there are such things woven into the texture of man, as the feelings of Awe, Reverence, Wonder;— and not alone the sexual love just referred to, but the love of the beautiful, physical, and moral in Nature, Poetry, and Art. There is also that deep-set feeling which, since the earliest dawn of history, and probably for ages prior to all history, incorporated itself in the Religions of the world. You who have escaped from these regions into the high-and-dry light of the intellect, may deride them; but in so doing you deride accidents of form merely, and fail to touch the immovable basis of the religious sentiment in the nature of man. To yield this sentiment reasonable satisfaction, is the problem of problems at the present hour."

JOHN TYNDALL.

INTRODUCTION.

IF religion be a reality, it is an element in the constitution of the universe, and it must be of such a character in its relation to God and man, time and eternity, that the proofs of its genuineness will be abundant and ever accessible to the mind. The first question religion suggests, refers to the existence of a personal God as the Creator and Governor of the world. Is the evidence we have of his existence of such a character as should convince and give content to every candid inquirer? The question has its peculiarities. It differs from all others of human experience; it must be examined solely in its own light; and only as we keep these considerations in view will we be able to decide what is admissible and conclusive as proof that a God exists. But when we put ourselves fully where the proof is, we shall find it coming in upon us in floods of light.

The idea of God has occupied the human mind longer, more fully, and more universally than any other. This idea has taken on a great variety of forms in different ages of the world, and among different nations; and in this fact may be seen its tenacity and persistence. How came this conception of a God to occupy so vast a space in the intellectual and moral history of mankind? A phenomenon of such wide significance demands a rational and full explanation. So vast and near and urgent is this question

to humanity, that all races and nations have felt compelled to think of it, and apply to it the principles of reasoning they use on other subjects.

In looking out upon the world, the savage and the philosopher are alike oppressed with the idea of the Infinite; only the mightier the capacity of the philosopher, the more deeply he feels the weight of its significance. "I tremble," said the cold, iron-nerved Kant, "when I think of the vastness of the universe." Such is the constitution of nature that only by self-annihilation can the mind relieve itself of the consciousness of existence as a part of the universe and of its infinite environments.

The ancient Hindu deified this conception of the infinite, and called it Varuna—"the broad and bright expanse of heaven." The same idea took form as the supreme God among the Greeks and Romans, bearing the title Zeus and Zeus Pater (Jupiter)—that is, Heaven Father. This conception of the infinite kept its hold for ages upon the minds of millions and millions of the most advanced thinkers of the human family; and, as a phenomenon of nature, does not this stupendous fact signify something? And, further, this idea of the infinite never had so deep a hold upon the minds of men—men of all nations—as at the present time. No one who thinks can free himself from it.

Socially, man seems to be about midway between the extremes of the littleness and the greatness of all we can conceive of the infinite. The chemist tells me that a molecule of water, the smallest particle of water that can exist, is composed of two atoms of oxygen and one atom of hydrogen; and I ask him to show me these atoms, but he replies: "I can't do it; they are too small. In a drop of water there are,

perhaps, millions of them; as atoms they belong to the 'unseen universe.' " I then ask him to tell me what their essence is, as distinguished from the essence of carbon and nitrogen—that by union they form water—and again he tells me that their essence belongs wholly to the realm of the infinite, and that he knows nothing about it. I then ask him to show me the *entity* of some kind of matter; and again he confesses that he can no more put on exhibition an entity of matter than he can show me a spirit, or a mind, or the life of a tree or bird.

It is thus matter teaches me by its aggregations that what we know of it is a projection, or an outcropping, of the real from a plethoric and prolific infinite; the little we have of it constitutes our world of sense, and serves as proof positive and absolute of the existence of a real, infinite unknown. As *this* world is substantive in nature, the *infinite* is also; "the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal."

As I look out of my window I see in every spire of grass, in every opening bud, in every bird that sings, in the beasts that crop the fields, and in the passing traveler, the ingress or the breaking through into this world of a world of Life. The first step I take to ascertain what these different kinds of life are, or from whence they came, I find myself standing on the extreme edge of a brink, beyond which all is infinite and unknown; not infinite nonentity, but an infinite rich in its fullness. The organic world is proof that the vital world has, to some extent, incorporated itself with matter, and by that means multiplied and extended its dominion. The little we know of the vital world indicates the vastness of its infinity.

The proper sphere of the mind is the realm of truth and ideas, and as such it belongs far more to the infinite world than it does to this world of sense. I step out and look upon the star Vega, an orb thousands of times larger than our sun, and 16,000,000,000,000 of miles distant from it. I notice a luminous spot in the far-away heavens beyond, and turning my great reflector upon it, a field of stars opens up before me; and as I advance toward them, and look into the infinite beyond, I discover another luminous spot on the sky; I find that this also is a field of thousands of stars, and that as neighbors they are trillions of miles apart. I go no further, for I find that thought staggers beneath its burden of the infinite.

But the word infinite is an extreme abstraction, and signifies nothing unless there is some *thing* or *being* that *is* infinite. There can not be an infinite number of stars; for great as the number might be, one or two more might be added. The globe is composed of a definite number of atoms, but we can conceive of an addition to that number. We can not conceive of additions to time or space; but ontologically these are nothing, and the word infinite, as applied to them, simply means unlimited. Then, to be of practical value, our ideas of the infinite suggested by the universe must carry the mind to a Being, an Intelligence, who has revealed himself to us in and by means of infinite, or rather by *divine*, attributes. If this world is the workmanship of a divine hand, the stamp of the infinite must be upon every part of it, and it must serve as a revelation of the attributes of its Maker.

As we look at the world, does it not suggest to us infinite power or energy? If each *atom* is a center

and source of power, how vast must be the energy locked up in the earth! Think of the energy displayed in the vital world. A large part of the surface of the globe, at one time and another, has been wrought into organic structures. Think of the energy existing in the universe, expressed by the words attraction and gravitation. Is it not infinite? or far more than we can conceive the infinite to be?

We have now two factors before us,—the infinite, and infinite power or energy. But think of the universe, infinite in time and space, with an infinite energy, blind and reckless, turned loose in it. Would not the result be another infinite—infinite chaos and confusion?

But power is not more conspicuous on the face of creation than intelligence, design, and purpose. Was it a happen-so that silicon possesses such a nature that it tends to reduce the matter of the globe to rock, and that nitrogen possesses such a nature that it tends to prevent the formation of any mass or solid substance, and the mixed world, as we have it, is the result of these opposing agencies? Was it a happen-so that the vital world was correlated to the abundant elements, oxygen, carbon, silicon, etc., thus giving us an organic world of infinite variety and of vast extent? Had life been related only to a few of the scarcer kinds of matter, as phosphorus, fluorine, iodine, etc., the globe would have been nearly a desert waste.

In the human body there are millions of different organs, nerves included, and yet these are so correlated as to form an organic unit. Is not the structure and correlation of the heart, the lungs, the veins, and arteries an expression of purpose? In the *diversities*

of their structure and functions can not we perceive the action of a will carrying into effect designs? Was it a happen-so that the kidneys, the liver, and the heart, as organs, are so thoroughly adapted to different kinds of work, and yet mutually dependent upon each other? Wisdom may be seen on a still higher plane in the matter of instinct. Wisdom of a *kind*—ready made—was *incorporated* in the bee; of another kind in the ant; of another kind in the spider; of another kind in the beaver; and of other kinds innumerable, in birds, insects, and beasts. Instinct forms a vast world of *fixed, incorporate* wisdom. From whence did it come? Is it not derived from that infinite wisdom which is one of the factors of the Infinite? Man is not thus endowed with wisdom; he has no instinct proper; but he is so constituted that he can think, perceive, frame ideas, compare one with another, reason, and acquire knowledge. To the bee, beaver, and bird is given wisdom *ready made*; to man was given a mind, and by thinking and putting his thoughts together he may become wise. Think of the wisdom which *so* framed the mind that it *could* acquire knowledge. We have now in hand the infinite,—infinite power, will, and infinite wisdom. Let us see if to these powers additions can be made. Think of what infinite power and infinite cunning could have done with this universe had they been conjoined with infinite malignity. In such a case this would have been constitutionally a world of positive evil, whereas, as it is, *there is no evil in its constitution*. Its fundamental elements are all good—so pronounced by their Creator. The evils which prevail everywhere are *all negative*; each one is simply the absence of some positive and possible good. Sin

is the great source of the world's evils; and what is sin but the absence of a holiness which might have been? Here, then, we find another factor—goodness, or benevolence—which must be regarded as a constituent of the Infinite.

How is it possible that energy, wisdom, will, and beneficence can meet in the same source and act as a unit for the same end, unless that will designate a Person? Can such an Infinite be otherwise than a Being divine in essence, self-existent, independent, and eternal? Whether a God exist or not, look which way we will, the world holds up before our face all the essential attributes of such a being. Is it conceivable that Energy, Wisdom, Will, Design, and Beneficence can be each an isolated existence, acting independently? Could beneficence be the outcome of such a chaos? "No man hath seen God at any time;" and why? Because being is a part of the infinite unknown. We are not permitted to see the entity of matter, nor a vital entity, nor a mind, nor being of any kind or order. Judging of substance from its phenomena, as we must, there is nothing nearer to us, or more manifest, than the infinite God. His attributes of power, wisdom, will, and goodness are ever present and manifest to the mind that can see. In no direction can we look without seeing evidence of their existence. The evidence of the action of these attributes can be as clearly seen in a mustard-seed as in the sun—in the instinct of the bee as the song of an archangel.

Let it be kept in mind that the words power, wisdom, will, and beneficence, signify nothing unless we postulate a *Being who is* energetic, wise, volitive, and beneficent; and it is not possible for these attributes

to exist at all unless they exist together as properties of the same person. Beneficence, unless associated with wisdom, will, and power, could not be beneficent. Wisdom without will and power and beneficence would be of no value to anybody. We are therefore driven to the necessity of conceiving the infinite that is *manifest before our eyes* in the universe as proof of the existence of a divine, self-existent, and eternal Being as the creator and the cause of all the various properties of which it is composed. This view we *must* take, or regard the elements of this infinite as having no relation to each other; and as mere abstractions, floating around loose, they amount to nothing.

On the basis of the above considerations, we assume that a God exists; and if so, it is self-evident that he exists as a Person, and that he is no part of the universe he made, nor of its forces. He is separate and distinguished from the infinite in the world he made, because he is *divine*. *As the sole divinity in existence, his nature creates a realm which is all his own.* He is necessarily separate and distinct from all other beings and things. He is the ever-existent *I Am*, and this can be said only of him. He is also independent and eternal, and in these respects he is isolated from all created things. As his *plane* of being is *divine*—a plane which nothing else can occupy—his existence does not interfere with other forms of existence, as they occupy different and lower planes. Matter, life, and mind, each having a realm of its own, do not interfere with each other. A world of extended matter can not come into collision with unextended mind, and Divinity alone can occupy the throne of the eternal.

The first approach which God made toward his creatures may be seen in the impress of Himself, which he placed upon creation, and which may *now* be seen there—his energy, wisdom, will, and beneficence. The watchmaker is no part of his watch, yet that instrument serves as a presentation of the skill he has incorporated in it. It is precisely in this sense the universe presents us its divine author.

The will of God can not be more clearly expressed anywhere, nor in regard to anything, than in the formation of a molecule of water or the structure of an acorn. Though the water and the acorn are no part of God, he has put and left his power and will and wisdom there, and there we now find them. Is it not a necessity that God should be for ever and ever incorporate in his own wisdom, power, will, and beneficence? He is not, then, far from any one of us.

Now, let us gather up these great truths, which we have found were imbedded in the constitution of nature, and see if they can not also be found integrated in the constitution of religion. What is religion? Subjectively, it embraces the spiritual and moral condition of the mind and the heart in their relation to God and man; and objectively, it takes on the form of theology, or the intellectual views we entertain in regard to God. In its last analysis religion expresses the proper relation of God and man, and the relation of man and man. What those relations are is expressed by the word love—supreme love to God and equal love to man.

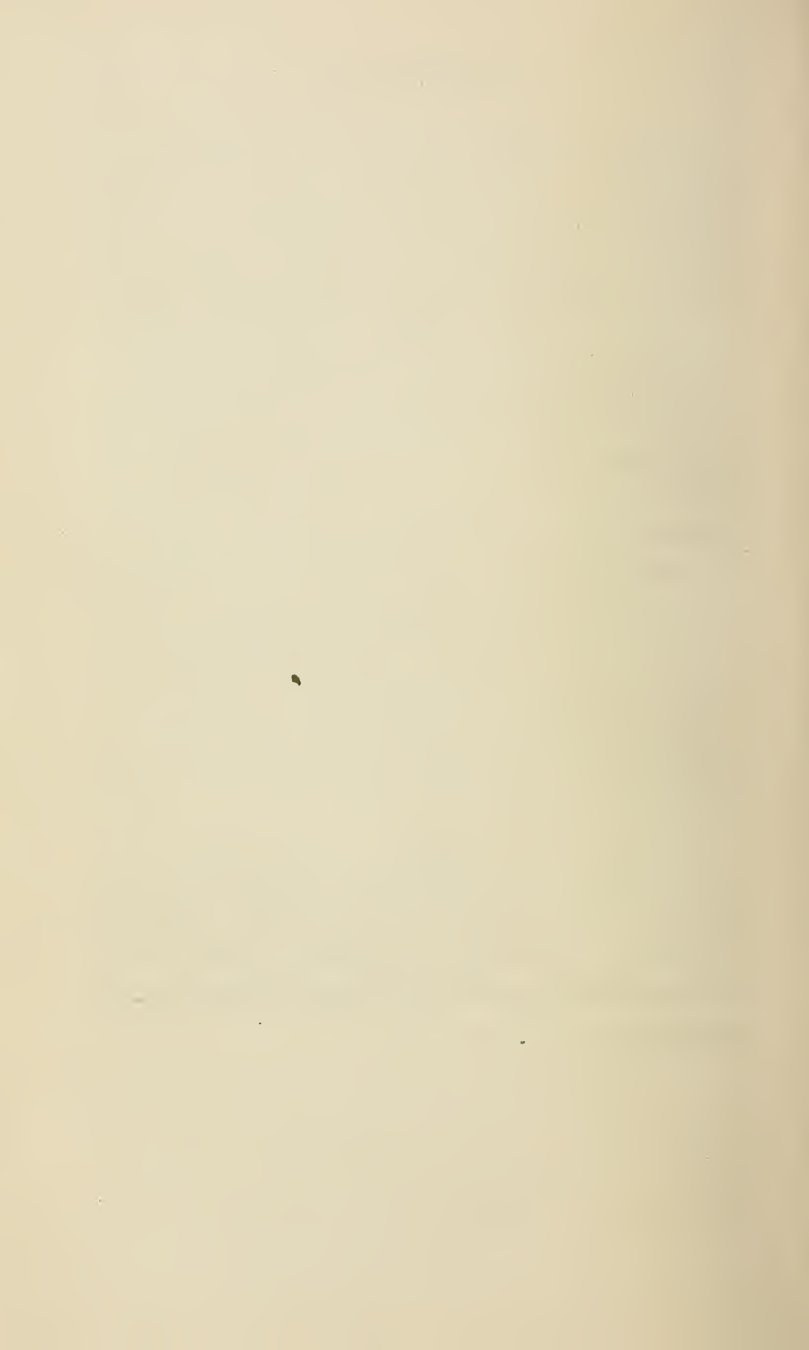
God sustains a relation to everything he has created, especially the relation of Governor; and the *elements* of the government are in every case modified so as to be adapted to the *thing* governed. Matter is

governed by physical law, and each different kind of matter is under the peculiar laws which are expressive of its own essence. The laws of life are not at all the laws of matter. The laws of intellect are peculiar to mind. Religion implies the prevalence of a law which binds the creature to his Creator. The different parts of material nature are bound together by its laws. Religion binds the human family together, and also to their God. The constitution of the universe, then, embraces as one of its elements the religious principle. In this sense considered, religion acts with the force of law; and as law it controls its department as other departments are controlled by their laws. Thus one principle—law—is made to touch every atom, every thing, and every being in the universe. All these great truths can be read with equal clearness in nature and revelation.

The stupendous fact has become patent to everybody that man, because of sin, has become an alien from his Maker. When, as in his case, the religious element of the constitution of the universe has become subverted, either the Creator must abandon man to his fate or a special effort must be made to bring him once more under the law of love. This law can be established in his nature only by the action upon him of the power of infinite love. We see here and there in the world marks of power, signals of wisdom, evidence of will, and tokens of benevolence; but man's restoration to God must be a work of love. John writes as a psychologist when he says: "We love God because he first loved us." As the divinity became incorporate at first in the constitution of nature, it afterwards, to meet a special emergency, became incarnate in humanity.

All the attributes of God, made manifest in creation, are again revealed in another form in the sacred Scriptures. In the Gospel the spiritual and moral elements—the parts fallen man needed the most—have been made pre-eminently conspicuous. Because man could not bring himself back to his Maker, and restore the damage sin had wrought in his nature—extinguishing spiritual life—the divine One came to him, removed all legal barriers out of his way, and placed the needed help—the quickening Spirit—within his reach. The word was proclaimed, the quickening Spirit attended it, and pardon was given to the penitent and believing. Religion *is* salvation; a holy life *is* a meetness for the heavenly inheritance. Salvation is not a transfer from earth to heaven, but a deliverance from sin, and the reception of spiritual life. Consequently it is a *re*-creation. It is God doing his first work over again, and placing the alien once more under the religious element of the constitution of nature. Such a character *is* salvation, and not a soul will be lost which would know and enjoy heaven if there.

The gospel then, religion, is an expression of the moral element of the constitution of nature; and when this fact is fully realized, an end will come to all forms of infidelity; and carping criticisms on Moses or on the translation of a text of Scripture will excite only contempt.



THE ANATOMY OF ATHEISM.

CHAPTER I.

INCIDENTAL CAUSES WHICH LEAD TO ATHEISM.

THEY eat
Their daily bread and draw the breath of heaven
Without or thought or thanks. Heaven's roof to them
Is but a painted ceiling, hung with lamps—
No more—that lights them to their purposes.
They wander loose about; they nothing see,
Themselves except, and creatures like themselves,
Short-lived, short-sighted, impotent to save.
To their dissolute spirits, soon or late,
Destruction cometh, like an armed man,
Or like a dream of murder in the night,
Withering their mortal faculties, and breaking
The bones of all their pride. —CHARLES LAMB.

§ 1. THE AFFIRMATIVE ELEMENTS OF INFIDELITY HAVE NEVER BEEN PUT INTO LOGICAL FORM.

If Atheism, as a system of thought, is composed of a body of wisdom which the world should accept as affording the right interpretation of nature, especially of man and his destiny, it must rest upon a broad basis of primal, affirmative, self-evident, or philosophical truths, exclusively its own. Atheism, as given us, is a *negative*, and no

structure, of any kind, can be built of such material. We are aware that the clamorous advocates of unbelief have failed to set in order for our examination its positive elements, if it have any; but as it is possible that this defect may arise from negligence and not the baselessness of the system itself, we have felt it our duty to institute an inquiry into this important question. If we take Atheism as it has been given to us by its most renowned devotees, and find that it is rooted in irrelevant, personal, and transient considerations, and not in self-evident or philosophical and eternal realities, we shall be compelled to conclude that there is nothing in it of permanent importance. We are all the more encouraged to look into this matter, because every form of skepticism—especially the scientific—tends to practical Atheism; and if we can cut the tap-root of the ugly plant, the stalk will be likely to wither and die.

§2. THE TENDENCY OF HUMANITY, IN ALL AGES,
HAS BEEN TO WORSHIP.

Men have generally, everywhere and in all ages of the world's history, manifested a tendency to worship, and the being which stood highest in their estimation has been the recipient of their first devotions. In ignorance of nature's laws, uncounted millions of our race have, by personifying and deifying its forces, worshiped a multiplicity of gods. The prevalence and force of this

tendency of humanity may be seen in the fact that the most costly and magnificent structures of all ancient nations have been temples consecrated to the worship of some god, true or false.

We are therefore led to conclude that Atheism, more than any other form of unbelief, has a subjective origin; that it is a device, invented by the mind, to close up a conscious vacuum that is there; it is humanity giving the lie to itself, wriggling to become what it was not made to be, and in this way it affords proof of a diseased or deranged nature. It is an attempt to suppress or smother out of existence, or at least render inactive, the powers of the mind which, with great force, have led all races of the human family devoutly to recognize a Supreme Being. All idea of responsibility for the secret thoughts and purposes of the mind can be got rid of only as the existence of a God is denied; and success in this undertaking, were it possible, would react in the greatest moral calamity that could come upon us. Atheism leaves the inward man a desolation, solitary and alone. It renders impossible all conceptions of holiness which is free from the taint of impurity.

Atheism, which is the inevitable result of *such* a destruction or perversion of the powers of the mind, is, of course, without any legitimate, positive foundation; it is the bad odor which follows death and decay.

§3. THE EXPERIENCE OF DR. JOHN TYNDALL WITH ATHEISM.

The following language, used by Professor Tyndall in the Preface to his famous Belfast Address, indicates that he had taken a careful survey of the ground above indicated. He says: "In connection with the charge of Atheism, I would make one remark. Christian men are proved by their writings to have their hours of weakness and doubt, and men like myself share in their own way these variations of mood and tense. Were the religious moods of many of my assailants the only alternate ones, I do not know how the claims of material Atheism upon my allegiance might be. Probably they would be very strong. But as it is, I have noticed, during years of self-observation, that it is not in hours of clearness and vigor that this doctrine commends itself to my mind; that in the presence of stronger and healthier thought it ever dissolves and disappears, as offering no solution of the mystery in which we dwell and of which we form a part."

The statement of Dr. Tyndall that the most devout Christians are, at times, assailed with doubt, will not be denied; and this fact, which he collates with his own experience, ought to give us a clear insight into some of the most frequent and important workings of the mind. Mind, like the body, may move from one point to another—drift from one subject to another. Different topics

affect it as do broken clouds the appearance of a landscape when drifting over it. It may wholly lose old interests as new ones come in and take their place. It may forget, and it may learn. It is said that Humboldt was an Atheist, and some of Darwin's admirers place him in the same category. But, even if these things were so, there is nothing in the facts of the case which can not be accounted for without discredit to religion.

§4. HOW BARON VON HUMBOLDT MAY HAVE DRIFTED INTO ATHEISM.

Humboldt became ingulfed in the "Cosmos" he studied so long and well. He not only left the Fatherland, his family, his friends, political ambition, all the associations of his home and early life, but he left religion, and mentally as well as bodily went away from them, and made brothers, sisters, and friends of the rocks, the rivers, the mountains, the volcanoes, the trees, the flowers, and the wild beasts of the plains and dens of earth. Every new aspect of the cosmos, which startled his vision, became, for the time being, the all-absorbing topic. Finally the Atheistic "moods" began to come on, with, perhaps, long intervals between them. At first he gave them but little attention, and their frequency increased. More and more he became absorbed in the cosmos, and eventually that became the universe to him. The physical laws, with which he was familiar, explained the visible phenomena of heaven and earth, and he allowed

of no interference with them. The infinite "cosmos," together with infinite time and space, seemed to exclude the possibility of the existence of any other infinite; and at least *his* cosmos was complete without a God, and he had no other use for such a Being. All these infinities so fully monopolized the mind of the great philosopher that, at last, he yielded to the Atheistic "mood," and it became permanent. Humboldt affords a fine illustration of the truth of Paul's aphorism: "The world by wisdom knew not God." Had God been a part of the cosmos, he would have been found and fully recognized; but as he was its Creator, and no part of the thing created, the investigation did not extend to him.

§5. THE VALUE OF HUMBOLDT'S EXPERIENCE AS A BASIS OF INFIDELITY FOR OTHERS.

But what does the unguarded and unfortunate experience of Humboldt amount to for other people, as a foundation for Atheism? Can any one see in it an affirmative, eternal principle, on which to build a system of unbelief? Father Secchi, a devout Catholic priest, is quite as much of a naturalist as Humboldt was, without his Atheism. The fact is, no man can abandon himself to the study of the constitution of matter, or to metaphysics, or to the vastness of the universe, and for any great length of time feel the inspiration of his theme, without either forgetting, for the time being, or drifting away from all other things,

religion included. We can afford to forget, for we can recall; but it is very bad to drift. An established truth should ever remain in the mind as a permanent possession, and then, whether we think of it much or little, its presence will tend to modify and give symmetry to all additional acquisitions. If, in passing from one field of thought to another, we forget or drift away from what we leave behind, our knowledge will always be one-sided, composed of half-truths, and lack completeness. In not fully considering these things, Humboldt was led to regard the cosmos as self-existent, self-sufficient, self-contained, and infinite. His Atheism was simply the presence in his mind of physical nature to excess, and the want of a supply of the spiritual and the moral. A certain mental distortion found in Atheism its natural expression.

Darwin, at an early age, became ingulfed in the study of another department of nature, and whether he became an Atheist or not, for some thirty years or more the religious side of his nature received but little attention. Probably ninety-nine men out of every hundred, the world over, in pursuing the same course, would have had a similar experience.

§6. THE RELIGIOUS CAPACITY OF MAN SUSCEPTIBLE OF EITHER GROWTH OR EXTINCTION.

We think that the facts of history warrant the assumption that, in the mind of man a religious

power, or a faculty for religion, exists, and like the other powers, it is subject to the law of growth and development. This being granted or assumed, then it follows that its interest can be promoted only as *activity is given to it*. Render it impossible for a babe to move its arm, and that limb will cease to grow, and after awhile it will wither and die. Analogous to this phenomenon, the musical or mathematical faculty of the mind, if neglected and long left without employment, will gradually lose its strength, and finally, perhaps entirely, disappear. That an old man or woman is not an accomplished musician, is no proof that in childhood each did not possess that faculty to an eminent degree. Nothing may have been wanting but action, growth, and development. The want of light—visual inaction as a consequence—has given us the eyeless fish which abound in the dark waters of the caves of the earth.

Here we have found a principle which, if duly considered, is sufficient to account for all the Atheism that is or ever was prevalent among literary men. Such persons become ardently engaged in some pursuit of business, politics, or literature—pursuits that may not be wholly free from moral taint—and the religious faculty is allowed to remain for half a life-time or more in a state of inactivity. Because God is not found as an element in chemistry, geology, astronomy, anatomy, or a factor in mathematics or psychology, the parties who make any one of these branches of study a

specialty, do not know how to look for him anywhere. On the supposition that it were possible for fishes to worship the sun, the eyeless class found in the dark waters of caves would be the Atheists of this part of creation; and, as a lack of physical activity of the fishes' eyes in the light has left them without sight, so the lack of spiritual activity has, in the main, given to the world its Atheists. The world by reasoning can not know God, and its helplessness arises from the fact that God is not an element or a factor in any of the natural sciences. As light can be apprehended only by the eye, and hearing by the ear, and music where there is a special faculty—such as some possess only to a small degree—so God can be known only where there is a spiritual power to apprehend him.

§ 7. THE ABSENCE OF AFFIRMATIVE PRINCIPLES
AT THE BASE OF INFIDELITY FATAL TO ITS
CLAIMS.

We look in vain in the writings of either Darwin or Humboldt for facts or principles which, by excluding the possibility of the existence of a Deity, solve the problems of the universe independent of him. In the main, along all lines of thought, where the Christian uses the title Creator they substitute the word Nature, Force, or Mystery. They find it difficult to endure the blank, or vacuum, which is occasioned by the absence of the Infinite One, and they try to fill it as best

they can. The Christian is in no way afraid of nature, nor of any proper deductions which can be made from it. In fact, the Atheist has not been able to meet the argument of the Theist, especially the design argument, and perhaps the request has in us an appearance of unkindness when we ask him to elaborate in detail the fundamental and positive elements of his unbelief. But we are compelled to do this, for his negatives as philosophy amount to nothing.

The *life* one lives is quite as likely to give character to his faith as the arguments he uses. Faith in God, as a branch in a vine, is not likely to experience a luxurious growth if planted in the soil of iniquity. If in the study of nature—matter, plants, insects, reptiles, fishes, birds, beasts, and man—we *try* to substitute its forces and laws for a personal Creator and Governor, we can possibly grow into that conception of the universe. In these and various other ways we may become the victims of the Atheistic “mood.” It was Tyndall’s conviction, the result of years of personal observation, that such moods were the results of mental depression, and that in the hours of clearness and vigor Atheism did not commend itself to his mind, and that in the presence of stronger and healthier thought it dissolved and disappeared.

§ 8. MATERIALISM NECESSARILY LEADS TO ATHEISM.

The philosophy which teaches that this is wholly a material universe, governed by physical

and mechanical law, renders impossible a conception of a moral government; and under the influence of such an empty arctic waste it is difficult for one to form even a proper conception of God, to say nothing of faith in him. But in the vernal atmosphere of right and wrong, of truth and holiness, of duty and responsibility—responsibility that penetrates all darkness, enters secret places, searches the heart, and brings to judgment every thought and feeling—it is not possible to resist the conviction that a God exists.

§9. ORIGIN OF THE PANTHEISM OF SPINOZA.

The misconstruction of an argument, in its remote effect, may lead to Atheism. Descartes recognized God as an element—force—in physical science; and this principle, in the hands of Spinoza, resulted in the most compact, logical, and powerful system of pantheism that was ever written. God, conceived as force, or wisdom, or as the infinite or the absolute, gradually, under the law of logic, loses his personality, becomes unidentified, and sinks down into the position of an element in metaphysics, or a factor in an argument, or as a part of the cosmos. The result is Atheism, whether it receive that name or not.

God is a divine moral Personality, and such he must be conceived to be, to be believed in at all. He can look with complacency upon a worm, an insect, or a weakness, or an ignorance, or an error; but between his awful holiness and guilt

there can be nothing but infinite antagonism. What could be more natural and easy than for a being who is moral, spiritual, and elevated, like God, to believe in him?

§ 10. THE AGNOSTICISM OF HERBERT SPENCER.

Herbert Spencer is one of a large class which would like to be known as a philosopher; and in regard to religion the title Agnostic suits them better than Atheist. Between his unknown Absolute and Herman Lotze's Infinite we can see but little room for choice. Spencer's universe as it is, is the Absolute partially evolved; Lotze's universe as it is, is God in action at this moment. The Infinite with one philosopher, and the Absolute with the other, stand as the cause of all phenomena. Lotze is, however, devoutly Christian; whereas Spencer regards Christianity as a sort of scaffolding, which will become worthless when his philosophy—especially his "data of ethics"—is understood. The man fancies that he has given to the world a new system of morals, whereas his most exalted sentiments are as old as the Abrahamic covenant. The highest and purest Christian ethics are expressed in these words: "Walk thou before me, and be thou perfect." "*In keeping the commandments there is great reward.*" "Fear God and keep his commandments, for *this is the whole duty of man.*" In teaching that well-doing contains in itself the highest reward, Mr. Spencer makes no new dis-

covery; but he utterly misconceives the ignorance and the waywardness of poor humanity when he supposes that his metaphysical ethics has any *power* to place man upon that elevated platform.

§ II. THE HELPS AND HINDRANCES TO FAITH.

We do not think the term Atheist should be bandied about in a flippant or careless manner; and though we have but little respect for Lotze's conceptions of God or his government, yet the character of the man entitles him personally to our highest respect. Divorcing his head from his heart, and letting his logic count for nothing, we hail him as a brother in the ranks of Christianity.

We are also willing that the name of Spencer should go down to posterity as a speculative philosopher of the highest rank, and as an Agnostic in religion.

But for the thorough-going materialist we know of no fitting title but Atheist. Could he demonstrate that matter is eternal; that life has always been one of its properties; that it established the laws by which it is governed; that it can think and will and feel; in short, could he prove that matter possesses the attributes we ascribe to God—moral, intellectual, and spiritual—he would make a decent showing for himself and his principles; but, as a consequence, he would cease to be a materialist and Atheist except in name.

CHAPTER II.

R. G. INGERSOLL, THE ACCREDITED CHAMPION OF
ATHEISM.

BECAUSE that which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God hath showed it to them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead. So that they are without excuse. Because that when they knew God they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.—PAUL.

§ I. THE INFIDELITY OF R. G. INGERSOLL.

The Field, Gladstone, and Ingersoll papers, which have been very extensively read by the general public in both this country and Great Britain, have given the last named gentleman the position of champion infidel of this age, and he stands forth conspicuously as the especial mouth-piece of modern Atheism. Any form of unbelief is acceptable to him, and, as a matter of policy, he is ever free to use that which is the best suited to an occasion.

There is reason to doubt whether it is possible for an infidel to become so settled and fixed in unbelief that the voice of the humanity within him can be silenced; but this man seems to have come as

near to that point as any of his contemporaries or predecessors; yet his writings fail to show us that he stands on a firm foundation of fact, or philosophy, or self-evident truth.

The papers above referred to are valuable, chiefly because they have revealed to us the mental and moral structure of this man, and uncovered the ground he occupies as the enemy of religion, natural and revealed.

§2. THE PECULIAR CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MAN.

Failing to find a valid cause for his skepticism in the arguments he has given us, we have been led, from many considerations, to look for it in the mental and moral structure of the man himself. Any one holding to his distorted views of God and nature, and to what he fancies God would be if a God existed, could be nothing but an Atheist. His antagonism to religion is subjective, rooted in his peculiar cast of mind and mode of thinking; and it does not arise from valid objections to real Christianity, but to religion as a whole, in any possible form. The man has his peculiar conceptions of religion, and with these he is at war, as everybody is at war with disease, poverty, and crime. In this conflict his deliverances, when he can not be heard, are generally read, but seldom a second time. The man is an orator; he is capable of saying pretty, sharp, bright things; but these, as arguments, have but a short-lived day. After the music of his voice is

hushed in death, he will be forgotten before the sod has had time to form upon his grave.

§ 3. A SERIES OF PERVERSIONS OF SCRIPTURE AND OF NATURE LEAD TO ATHEISM.

Though he is an orator of high intellectual endowments, yet these are far surpassed by the vigor and intensity of his emotional nature. In his mental make-up a vivid imagination, a playful fancy, and the keenest sensibilities are most happily combined, and these constitute the all-controlling forces of his being. His life practically is that of a thorough-going worldling of the social type; not, however, of the highest order. He seems to have no conception of the spiritual and the holy, no idea of a sinless purity, and no sense of the sacred and divine; yet where his coarse, irreligious proclivities are not offensive, he is said to be a companionable man. He is endowed with quick but not broad sympathies, and though not a profligate, his feelings are not of the most elevated character. His profession as a lawyer and a politician have brought him some rude shocks, which have done much to embitter and give shape to his life. His business and social associations have made him familiar with all forms of vice, and his highest ideal of virtue is the common species of refined selfishness. Having no belief in God, nor in any supernatural being, it is not possible for him to conceive of a virtue which

is rooted anywhere but in depraved humanity. The idea of untainted moral purity floats not even in the region of his imagination.

§4. THE MISCELLANEOUS CHARACTER OF HIS ACQUISITIONS.

As a necessitarian, he perceives but the faintest trace of any moral quality in human conduct, and both intellect and moral principle are always subservient to the feeling he may chance to have on any occasion. The low and the criminal which characterize human society he regards as *necessities*, and, as a consequence, they find no active antagonist in him. He can smile at a lie as well as at a joke, providing it is smart and answers its purpose.

The comparative absence in his mind of the reasoning faculty gives all the more room for the play of fancy and the gush of feeling. The most cogent chains of logic are as easily broken as a spider's web, when assailed by his emotions. Whatever he may say on any subject is more an expression of what he has *felt* in regard to it than what he has thought. Take from him the fire and the flash of wit arising from fancy and feeling, and the residue left of his mental furniture would be only dead coals and cold ashes. Consequently, as an intellectual guide in the realm of fact, principle, and philosophy, he is no more trustworthy than the will-o'-the wisp.

§5. PERSONAL DISQUALIFICATIONS TO APPRECIATE RELIGION.

He has read quite thoroughly the French infidels, especially Diderot and Voltaire. In a general way he is somewhat familiar with Spencer and Darwin; but we find no proof in his writings that he has mastered any system of philosophy. The speculations of Descartes, Locke, Hume, Kant, Hamilton, Mansel, and Martineau, are quite outside of his patience, if not his faculties; and, at best, such material is too subtle and abstract to be suited to the gyrations of his playful fancy. The "Mistakes of Moses," and the far away shadowy age in which he lived, are far better suited to his peculiar genius, as they afford a wider field for the loose range of his imagination. There he is brought into contact with the human element; feeling becomes enlisted in the strife, and the way is opened for invective. These give to him very much the character of a gladiator, only his weapons are his tongue and his pen.

As a psychological element, he appears to have no conception of the *will* and its volitional power as the basis of responsibility, either in himself or in others. Will, feeling, and motive are indiscriminately confounded; or if, in any case, a relation is perceptible between them, it is the mechanism of cause and effect. The one idea that he never forgets is, that man is an irresponsible creature of necessity.

The abstract world of truth, of right and wrong, of justice and judgment, considered as eternal and unchangeable principles, he never in any way recognizes. Here we painfully perceive that his mind lacks penetration, breadth, grip, and balance. For this reason, as religion, natural and revealed, is composed, especially its basal elements, of principles which are abstract, spiritual, and eternal, it eludes his grasp. The pure and high realm it occupies seems to lie beyond the reach of the perverted faculties of this skeptic. Were he familiar with the exercise of reasoning on fundamental principles, whether of science, philosophy, political economy, or anything else, such experience would enable him to see more clearly, and hold in hand more steadily, the abstract truths of religion.

§ 6. PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SKEPTIC.

It is said this man is indebted for his popularity, such as it is, to his amiability and kindness of spirit, especially in his family. It is well that he has not the coarse, gross selfishness of Paine; for, even without his bad habits, so foul are his scoffs and blasphemies, indulged in to catch the applause of the basest sort of society, that a man of religious sensibilities would recoil from speaking to him on the street. Such feelings in regard to any subject constitute an utter disqualification for forming a correct judgment in regard to it. What lawyer would try a man for his life before

a judge and jury who were known to be bitter enemies? Religion never appears as it is if seen through a hazy atmosphere of spite and ill-will.

But in his harshest utterances against religion, though often bitter and sarcastic in the extreme, he is never malignant against its friends. He seems to care nothing for religion in any way except to keep it as far as possible from himself. In reading his rollicking sentences, one often feels that the man has no convictions; that he is a trifler, a mountebank, acting a part, fulfilling an engagement, earning his salary, and not at all sincere. But to make a point against religion, or indulge in his exuberant wit, or excite in others levity and scorn, anything is lawful which will accomplish his purpose. A serious man, one who cared for consequences, in treating a subject of such awful moment, would endeavor to keep the horizon of his intellect unclouded, and then walk in its light; but this skeptic regards his feelings, mostly of vituperation if at their extreme height, as the oracle whose deliverances should be accepted as the truth on the subject of religion. This excessive indulgence of emotion has made him a narrow, one-sided man; and in the field of pure thought and logic he amounts to nothing.

§7. THE INTELLECTUAL A SECONDARY POWER IN THE MAN.

An original character is always interesting. It has something of the fascinations of a new

fashion. We see beautifully combined in him, especially in his quiet, passive moments, the rugged strength of a man, the tenderness of a woman, and the simplicity of a child; but suggest to him the idea of God, the obligations of religion, or the retributions of eternity, and at once his lack of mental balance allows him to be carried in any direction by his prancing fancy or the flood-like rush of his feelings. The execution of the heretic Servetus, with the acquiescence of Calvin, has for years afforded an inexhaustible theme for his rhetoric, and the indulgence of his towering, wrathful emotions. It has not, however, occurred to him that the murder was committed in violation of both the letter and spirit of religion as taught by Christ and his apostles. The ecclesiastical and civil tyranny which persecutes for conscience' sake is not religion, nor any part of it. In the light of this unfortunate transaction, we may see the wide difference between the mental structure of the great Genevan theologian and our infidel philosopher. The one was all intellect, and he knew of no other way to act except to follow argument and conscience. It mattered not where his remorseless logic led him, his sense of duty or loyalty to truth made it necessary for him to obey. He consented to the death of Servetus because the logical conclusion of his argument was that a heretic should die.

Such allegiance to reason, it matters not what is proved, Ingersoll knows nothing about. He is

utterly oblivious to its binding force, and he can see nothing in the death of Servetus but fiendish cruelty on the part of the really generous but mistaken Calvin.

In the fields of mathematics, chemistry, physics, and mechanics, he could never have been a success. Facts, figures, angles, triangles, squares, cubes, logarithms, atoms, molecules, levers, pulleys, and axles, could never have been made by any possible apotheosis to take on such forms as his feelings and fancy might suggest. At every turn he would find such material unmanageable, and an embarrassment to the flights of his peculiar genius.

But such is the mental structure, such the peculiar fitness of the man who has undertaken to instruct cardinals, bishops, and philosophers in regard to the non-existence of God and the destiny of man. The man, in person, should be kept before us at every separate step in the argument, as it is necessary to distinguish between conclusions which are purely logical deductions from well-established premises, and conclusions which are nothing more than the expression of a feeling of sympathy or indignation on account of something that somebody has done. We can imagine the convulsions of horror and spasms of wrath he would experience at being reminded of the Roman general who ordered the execution of his son for a brave and useful act—slaying, in single combat, a champion on the other side—because it was

done without orders. He would not stop a moment to *reflect* upon the importance of military discipline, the safety of the army, and the welfare of the empire—present and future—but his whole soul would go out with flash and fury against the father, and at the same time melt in pity for the son. We see the amiableness of the man, but we would not select him to be a pillar in the State or a leader in moral principle.

§8. HE CAN FORM NO IDEA OF FAITH AS A RELIGIOUS ELEMENT.

Why faith should be the red flag to our skeptic we have found it difficult to explain; but such it is, and he never fails to curve his neck at sight of it. To make faith clear, and give it emphasis as a basic element in the religious life, many expedients have been providentially adopted, and chief among these was the exhibition and trial of the faith of Abraham in the offering of Isaac, and of the Syro-Phœnician woman. In utter and astonishing obliviousness of the spiritual part of the transaction, he can see nothing in it but a myth or a heathenish practice. He looks upon it from the stand-point *he* occupies, and judges of it *as if he had, without any object*, performed it. His all-controlling *feelings* will not allow him to take any other than a subjective view of that event. Of course the lesson conveyed he wholly misses. In the Christian system, faith in God, which is also God in faith, develops spirituality, and it is

regarded as its most fundamental element. Faith is more to the Christian life than the mainspring is to the watch or the heart to the body, for it is through its transforming power that the believer is "made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light."

Let us look, for a few moments, at the moral and spiritual elements which give to the virtual sacrifice of Isaac *all* its significance, but which the skeptic is not able to recognize in any way. The faith and consequent obedience of Abraham in this transaction stand forth in the moral heavens as stars of the first magnitude, and they can not but be seen except when there is absolute blindness. He had accepted the promise that he, through his son Isaac, was to be the father of a great nation; and during all the fiery ordeal through which he was called to pass, he staggered not through unbelief, and in standing firm in the faith, glorified God. Nowhere else in the Bible, nor out of it, can be found so clear and impressive a presentation of faith as the fundamental element of religion, as has thus, in the person of Abraham, been done, and kept for thousands of years before the world for its instruction.

We are further taught that, valuable as life in this world is, it is not the chief good. Death is not the extinction of being. How many men of honor, rather than shrink from duty or tarnish their good name, have laid down their life! In the conduct of Abraham we simply see that religion

can elevate the soul to this high plane, and hold it there, not as a captive slave, but as a moral and immortal victor. Abraham stood erect in the high region of the intellectual and the spiritual, when God was recognized and obeyed; the skeptic is found on the other side of the circle, and his vision is bounded by the social plane of the present life. The realm of faith and obedience, illuminated by the divine presence, and for ages known to all believers as "Mount Moriah," is a true Beulah-land, which infidelity can never understand.

Isaac, dead or alive, was a small matter compared to the moral and spiritual elements which, through his proposed sacrifice, shone out upon mankind. Abraham saw in it the "day" of Christ and the resurrection of the dead. As a beacon-light it has dispersed the darkness from the minds of millions. The entire transaction should be judged in the light of these facts and principles; and thus seen, its true character will be understood, and nothing more exalted and beautiful can be found in the Bible.

We call special attention to this subject here, because it will demonstrate to the satisfaction of the reader that Colonel Ingersoll does not bring to the study of religion the capacity—the perception, the candor, the calmness, and the judgment—necessary to understand it. There is scarcely any event recorded in the Old Testament that he reprobates and ridicules more violently than this, and at no time or place does he utter a word which

indicates that he knows anything of its true meaning. The judgment and feelings which he brings to the discussion of this topic, abide with him in all he has to say on the question of religion, and are equally worthy of respect, and no more. It is not necessary, therefore, in accounting for his warfare upon religion, to extend the discussion beyond the man himself.

CHAPTER III.

INSUFFICIENCY OF THE FACTS PRODUCED IN SUPPORT OF INFIDELITY.

SELF is the medium least refined of all,
Through which opinion's searching beams can fall,
And passing then, the clearest, steadiest ray
Will tinge the light and turn the beam away.

—MOORE.

§1. INVECTIVE AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR ARGUMENT.

As the accredited champion of Atheism, Ingersoll should long since have furnished the world with a carefully prepared philosophic basis on which the system rests. He should not seek to demolish the cottage, which shelters us, and has sheltered millions and millions before we were born, without otherwise providing for our accommodation. But this is not what has been done. He proposes to send us adrift, and, without a home or guide, to wander where we may.

Christianity has been denounced, derided, and scoffed at *ad libitum*, and the time is come when infidelity should do some *positive* work for itself. If it has found a basis in affirmative, fundamental truth on which it can rest, that basis should be brought forward. Whatever of truth it contains, that truth can be wrought into philosophic form. It can, perhaps, be spun into different threads,

or conducted along different though not crossing lines. The wide field of physical science invites attention; perhaps metaphysics has contributions it can make; possibly moral philosophy, and even theology, can be pressed into service. A field as wide as the universe is thus open before the Atheist; and if the philosophy of his doctrine affords footing for his unbelief, we have the right to know what it is. If either of the above indicated lines of thought leads to Atheism, they all do, and a conclusion which is the result of their combined strength would be overwhelmingly strong.

But we have nothing of the kind. The most notorious infidels of both ancient and modern times have been far more given to ridicule, invective, and blasphemy than sober argument. Then, in the absence of a system of philosophic infidelity, we must be content to examine such material as we have.

§2. THE SKEPTIC'S CONCEPTIONS OF THE WORLD WE LIVE IN.

This depends upon his ability, education, and habits of thought. Had our doughty champion received a thorough scholastic education, then devoted some years to the study of history and philosophy, he would have been a wiser and broader man than he is, and far better equipped to play the rôle of American champion advocate of Atheism. Intellect would have been more in the ascendant, the mind would have been more

familiar with different realms of thought and their mutually modifying influence, and reason would have been more amenable to the laws of logic. The idea of vastness, with its heights and depths, length and breadth, littleness and greatness, simplicity and complexity, the known and the unknown, would ever, as ballast, be present to his mind. As the case stands, the world he lives in—all the world he pretends to know anything about—is existing, concrete humanity. Men, women, children, society, government, religion, the family, human joys and sorrows, and whatever touches our race in this life, he claims, come very near to him. As man has no future beyond this world, the present necessarily is made to absorb all human interests.

Were it a fact, visible to the public, that this man is able to sympathize so deeply with the hopes and fears, the joys and sorrows, of his fellow-beings; feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, uplifting the poor, and securing to the youth of the land a *pure literature*,—we should freely recognize his amiable and generous nature; and if an existence in this world were all of life, nothing more could be desired. Perhaps this part of his history has not yet been written.

In vain we look for any recognition of government or for the laws of character as causes of human weal or woe; but the universe he gives us is simply a soft, sympathetic feeling for present interests. We are never taken into the field of

moral conflict, where stalwart, virtuous characters, actuated by an intelligent, unyielding conscience, are battling for the right. A world of duty, responsibility, and self-denial he knows nothing of.

§ 3. INDULGENCE THE SKEPTIC'S ONLY CONCEPTION OF GOVERNMENT.

He is a man of intense subjectiveness, and out of himself, as out of an immense personality, there arises the only world which he recognizes as external to himself. Like the glow-worm, he moves in the light of his own impulses, and he knows no other guide. Of truth and reality, of right and wrong, of purity and sin, considered as abstract and eternal principles, the purity being the source of happiness, and the sin the cause of misery, he has no conception. In the presence of this vast ideal world of principles and laws—physical, intellectual, vital, and spiritual—his mind is a blank, and all that he can conceive of man is embraced in the concrete now. His reflections upon human interests receive such an Atheistic coloring from his own feelings in regard to current temporal affairs, that God and eternity are excluded. Such are the strength of his personality and the ardor of his sympathies, that the only element of government he can recognize is unlimited indulgence. His family government he would use as the model for the government of the world. Do as you please, and let the consequences take care of themselves. The idea of discipline, restraint, and self-denial

are foreign to his notions of life. He even confesses that he can form no conception of an infinite being as the moral governor of the world; and we think his confession sincere. He has given to his mind such a cast as excludes from it the fundamental principles of all forms of religion. There is a species of clam which can expel the air; then by closing its lids or valves, as a philosopher, create within a vacuum; then rise, and float wherever the current or waves may carry it. Like the mollusk, the infidel seems to be capable of expelling the light from within his mind, and leaving a dark vacuum there; for in this condition we find him. His infidelity is thus fully accounted for, and it is no discredit to the claims of Christianity. The man is not reasonable who closes his eyes, and then complains of the sun; or denies that there is a sun, because he can not see. To know Ingersoll's cast of mind, especially to see the moral desert that is there, is to understand that the root cause of his antagonism to religion is the fact that he recognizes no moral governor. What vitriol is to his flesh, the thought of accountability is to his soul.

§4. THE IDEAL GOD WHOSE EXISTENCE THE INFIDEL COULD ADMIT.

At times he evidently regrets that there is not such a God as, in fancy, he would be able to create. If such a being existed, there would be no floods or drouths, no volcanoes or earthquakes, no

cyclones or dead calms, no raging flames, no birth-throes, no deaths, no crimes, no miseries, but reins would be given to unrestrained indulgence, and this would be attended by uninterrupted happiness.

But such is not this world; hence it can have no moral governor, of infinite wisdom, power, and goodness. At no point along his dreamy line of thought does the Bible render him any assistance; for, in attaching suffering to sin, it leaves him, with nature, in helpless, hopeless Atheism. Nature, in its administration of justice, quite as deeply outrages his feelings, in regard to what is wise and right, as the records of the Old Testament. He would regard as an "infinite fiend" the being who could be the author of either form of administration. His principles of government compel him to recognize in himself excellencies which are not to be found in any God of any religion—heathen, Jewish, or Christian. Next to himself, around the myth Buddha more virtues cluster than attach to any other name in history.

And yet this man's conceptions of virtue, truth, and government, are not altogether the inspiration of mere vanity or conceit, but rather they spring from his intense personality—the tap-root of his being. He is in all things so thoroughly subjective that, unconsciously, he makes himself the standard of all excellency and perfection, human and divine. In the absence of all consciousness of abstract principles, he is unable to see beyond

the horizon of his own feelings and experience. He is structurally, or by education, one thing, and religion is another.

§5. THE VAIN STRUGGLES OF THE INFIDEL TO SATISFY HIMSELF.

A one-sided development of humanity is a distortion of man that brings restlessness and pain. The full-orbed man, with properly adjusted environments, is at rest. Could we believe that the man ever lived who, because of his constitutional make-up, was free from religious responsibility, Colonel Ingersoll would not be placed in that category. The man does not live who gives clearer proof that, in common with the rest of his race, he possesses the religious faculty, than this man. He has given his life, largely, to the most perplexing studies of this subject. Had not the religious principle been deeply rooted in his nature, he could never have taken any interest in an outside religious world. Long continued wrangling over a subject may evince as deep an interest as the warmest devotion. It is not possible for us to care for that which is, in no way, a part of ourselves, as its relations are wholly foreign to us. The wife who has come intensely to hate her husband, affords proof thereby that once she loved him. If in separation there is indifference, then there was never anything more. Woman's love may not die, but it can make her a tigress.

As one studies the writings of Ingersoll, and

notes carefully what is written between the lines, it is easy to perceive that he has not always been true to truth as it has been made known to him; and he is not now able to conceal the fact that he is ill at ease in the presence of the mystery of life, the horrors of death, and the unsolved problems of another world. Such emergencies require special equipments, and these infidelity can not furnish. The qualifications for making this journey must be personal; for we must go alone, and take nothing with us but ourselves. Only in a fully developed Christian manhood, with the spiritual largely in the ascendant, can we find the victorious counterpart of death and eternity. The infidel can not but feel the blight his soul suffers in this respect. He may have seasons of stupor, but not of rest. He wrangles and writes and lectures for the same reason that the boy whistles in passing a grave-yard. Cut loose from his moorings, and afloat in the dark, stormy night, he has constant fears of destruction.

§ 6. NATURE AND REVELATION OBJECTED TO ON THE
SAME GROUNDS.

The world presents the same aspect of sin and suffering to the Christian and infidel, and in regard to the facts there is no dispute. The Scripture representation is as follows: "There is none righteous, no, not one;" and "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain until now." The facts are clear enough, but what we

want is the proper interpretation of them. The infidel, led by his perverted judgment and soured feelings, ascribes the wrongs and sorrows of earth to the agency of God, if a God exist. Hence, the Bible is discredited, and, for the same reason, the existence of God is denied. Thus religion, natural and revealed, is swept away, and man is left without God and without hope.

This is a point of the very first importance, and it will receive much attention in the course of this discussion. We wish here simply to fix attention upon the fact that Ingersoll is quite as much the antagonist of the religion of nature as of revelation, and uses the same arguments against both. "Infinite fiend" is the title he would apply to the Being who could be the author of either.

He seems to be utterly incapable of grasping the proposition, when clearly presented to him, that, in the spirit of benevolence, a perfect world could be created and governed by laws of absolute perfection; a voluntary conformity to which would result in the greatest good, as it would preserve the unity and harmony of the whole; and antagonism, the greatest evil, because of the strife, disorder, and confusion it would produce. To ordinary minds—in fact, to the multitudes of all ages—such conception of the universe has been easy enough, and it has been wrought into the framework of government and society in all civilized countries. A failure to understand the idea of government by law, in all its vast and mighty

sweep, necessarily leaves the way open for any one to drift into infidelity.

§ 7. THE RELATION GOD SUSTAINS TO THE UNIVERSE.

The mind which can clearly comprehend God as Creator on the one hand, and the universe on the other, might be able to define the relation they sustain to each other—no lesser mind can do it. Any attempt of that kind, however, which involves an absurdity, a contradiction, or any idea derogatory to God, we are not required to accept. Hence, the conception, whether entertained by Christian or infidel, that God's relation to the universe is such that he must necessarily be the sole, the arbitrary, and direct cause of whatever is, we promptly reject. We reprobate the idea that he is the only active force in the universe—that all else is passive.

But our champion infidel holds if a God exist, that every being and everything alike, from moment to moment, must bear the fresh stamp of his power, and that whatever is—crime of all kinds, as fully as virtue—must be regarded as expressions of his will and good pleasure. He holds that the world is composed of a mixture of good and bad, of joy and woe, because there is no God; whereas, if such a being existed, and his wisdom, power, and goodness were infinite, virtue and unceasing felicity *must necessarily* be the result. Physical nature and the animal creation, as well as man,

would always, in every particular, serve as an expression of his wisdom and beneficence. The universe, as a whole, is conceived to be made up of one cause and manifold effects; and as the purpose of the cause is seen in the effects, God is made the author of the crimes and miseries of the world. Further on, this ground of the infidel will be plowed as if it were a field.

The infidel's idea of the moral element in government may be seen in the language he uses in regard to the atonement. He says: "It is based on the idea that right and wrong are expressions of an arbitrary will, and not words applied to and descriptive of acts in the light of consequences."

We, believing that an infinite God exists, hold that the words "right and wrong" not only embrace such moral principles, but that they also express the divine will. Right and the best of consequences, in the long run, go hand in hand, and it is never safe to do wrong. Should the abstract principles of right and wrong be abolished, and selfish human conceptions of "consequences" be substituted, the dry rot, if not something worse, would come upon society. The demand is here made by infidelity that the moral quality of right and wrong be abolished, and that the idea of the consequences of an act be substituted; then, when an enterprise of any kind is presented for our consideration, we should simply inquire: "Will this pay? will it produce pleasure

or gratification?" and if so, it should be performed. Here we get but the key-note of the effort which is to be made to eliminate the moral element from the universe. More anon.

But in passing, bear in mind it is because the Bible and nature teach that the moral world is based upon abstract, unchangeable, and eternal laws of "right and wrong," recognized as such by infinite wisdom, and because only by the maintenance of these laws can good "consequences" be produced to the obedient, that the world is not what it should be in the judgment of this skeptic.

We are not now engaged with Colonel Ingersoll in argument, but taking a survey of the ground he stands on, and calls his own in his contest with religion. If the stakes and lines we have pointed out are well observed, they will greatly aid us at every step in judging of the strength of his position.

§ 8. SUPERFICIAL CONCEPTIONS OF NATURE.

In the single fact of this world's misery Ingersoll has endeavored, as will appear, to engulf the universe and annihilate God. Nowhere, that we have seen, has he even suggested that it was desirable to harmonize the world's evil with the idea of the existence of a moral Governor. He has so thoroughly occupied himself with earth's wrongs, that he takes them to be the whole. He is like the Hindu who, in coming down from the mountains, should come across in the jungles of Bengal the

maugled leg of an elephant, and take it to be the whole of some unfortunate beast. How surprised would this child of the Himalayas be to see an hour later the live animal, and learn that the object of his pity was only the leg of a beast the lions had torn to pieces. When the skeptic has spent some years in trying to grasp the universe as a whole, especially the idea of its government by law, he may be able to see that a God can exist, and not be the author of sin and misery.

CHAPTER IV.

THE VALUE OF INFIDEL ARGUMENTS CONSIDERED.

SOME men seem to think the only character of the Author of nature to be that of simple absolute benevolence. This, considered as a principle of action and infinite in degree, is a disposition to produce the greatest possible happiness, without regard to person's behavior, otherwise than as such regard would produce higher degrees of it.—BISHOP BUTLER.

§ I. THE PERSONAL RELATION OF THE INFIDEL TO RELIGION.

We are anxious to acquaint ourselves with the arguments which have led any man to embrace the teachings of Atheism, and to this end we have labored to get at the mental and moral make-up of skeptics—to see things as they see them, and feel the full force of all the considerations which have carried their minds to conclusions so dark and dreadful. At the same time we have been on the watch for some affirmative principle, or self-evident basal element, which so underlies the constitution of nature as to exclude the possibility of the existence of a Creator and Governor.

More frequently, however, than anything else, we have been led directly to the skeptic himself, and find that there was something in his history,

or character, or experience, which, as a mere incident, has brought about this result. The earthquake at Lisbon made an Atheist of Voltaire. In all such cases the doctrine has no legitimate foundation of its own, and it may be regarded as a mere whim born of an unfortunate event or a distempered mind. After a position has been taken and announced, arguments will concrete about it *ad infinitum*, and every one is an after-thought, intended to buttress a position that it is not pleasant to abandon nor easy to hold.

A gladiator can in no sense be considered as an investigator. He regards the case as tried, and he is in the field to kill. Is not this exactly the position Colonel Ingersoll holds in this controversy? Is it not clear that he looks upon religion, natural and revealed, very much as an ancient Mohawk chief might look upon the costumes of a city belle or of a fashionably dressed young man? There, in his moccasins, he strides forth, six feet in height. His deer-skin leggins are elaborately fringed with the skins of rattle-snakes; his breech-cloth and overshirt are decorated with porcupine spines, in the highest style of savage art; his face and forehead disfigured by paints, suggests more than the fierceness of the tiger; and his head is made hideous by a gear of buffalo-horns, bear's-teeth, eagle's-claws, and bird's-feathers. At his back is swung a quiver of arrows; in his left hand he carries a bow; from his belt hang his tomahawk and scalping-knife; and animated with

mingled pride and vengeance, he is eager, and hastens to meet his foe.

Any one will admit that in appearance the savage is picturesque in the extreme. According to his own taste his costume is a model of perfection. But where is the tailor, or the dressmaker, or the young lady or gentleman, who would wish to submit the question of taste in dress to the arbitration of such a judge? Certainly he could try the case only according to his own laws of fitness, convenience, and beauty; for he would know of no other standard of judgment. It might be expected that if the solemn savage deigned to laugh, or sneer, or scoff, or indulge in sarcasm, that he would treat the costumes of Christian civilization as the colonel treats Christianity itself. And is it not possible that in the one case, as in the other, the cause of the contempt would be in the character, feelings, and habits of the man, and not in the thing despised?

After all, it is the argument, not the man, which should have weight in a discussion. But in a case like this, assertions should count for nothing. We should stand unmoved by the hot temper and hard blows of the gladiator; extravagant expressions should be properly discounted; the subjective character of all that is said, if duly considered, will count for nothing; judgments should not be tainted by a mixture of feeling; and this sloughing-off work should go on till we are

sure that in the residue we have nothing but fact and logic left.

It is quite likely that our doughty skeptic will feel highly complimented by the suggestion that, in his views and feelings, he is as far from all that is essential in Christianity as the ancient savage could be from the refinements of civilized life. The *man himself*, far more than argument or philosophy, is arrayed against religion. Nowhere in his writings have we been able to find an affirmative abstract principle.

§ 2. THE VALUE OF SUBJECTIVE ARGUMENTS AGAINST RELIGION.

If a man's nature, spiritual, intellectual, moral, and emotional, was fully and harmoniously developed, and Christianity were true, the one would be but the counterpart of the other; but our hypothetical man was never known to exist. On the other hand, all men give evidence of ignorance, of having perverted judgments in some things, of passion and prejudice. In most cases the unfolding of human nature, as seen in history, gives us anything but a pure and spiritual man. The shades of character are innumerable, and many are very low down and base. We might, then, expect that arguments that were subjective—that is, were rooted in any man's peculiar mental and moral make-up—would, more or less, lead to infidelity. Sweet waters can not come from a bitter fountain. Arguments drawn from the proclivities of

some mental and moral developments could be nothing but the darkest Atheism.

The considerations which influence such minds are personal, and may be, as they ought to be, powerless elsewhere. They have no necessary connection with religion, either for or against it, except as proofs of its doctrine of depravity. Were the man in nature identical with religion, they would then have a mutual bearing upon each other; but the foul effervescence of a human soul is one thing and the Rock of Ages is another. The skeptic may make along his pathway a great noise; he may occasionally even entrance us with the charms of his rhetoric; but if we bear in mind that there is nothing of it except that a very gifted man is in a state of irruptive activity, a mere overflow of self, what is said will receive only the stamp of its true value, and he will cease to be a power to blight the youth of the country.

§ 3. ARGUMENTS WHICH MIGHT BE LEGITIMATELY URGED BY INFIDELS ARE NEGLECTED.

Religion, proper, is simply the obedience of love to God and the service of love to man. Theology is an expression, in logical and systematic form, of the fundamental elements of religion. It is seldom that an attack has ever been made directly upon religion itself; but theology, more or less a human structure, has been and can be assailed. Church organizations, as they exist to-

day, are, especially in a multitude of their details, human institutions, and all are open, more or less, to attack. But systems of theology may be badly shattered, and ecclesiastical structures criticised with success, and religion *per se* remain untouched. But there are questions which we might wish could be brought out into a clearer light and settled. Is our knowledge of the existence of God dependent upon revelation? Is the idea of God in the soul of man anything more than a metaphysical speculation? Can we approach any nearer to the Divine Personality than Spinoza's "Substance," Hartman's "Unconscious Will," Spencer's "Absolute," Lotze's "Infinite," Hamilton's "Unconditioned," and Schopenhauer's "Universal Will?" Or, let him unravel nature, and show that all that has ever occurred is the result of chance—that nowhere does nature give proof of wisdom, design, or benevolence. Here is room for argument; but it is a field our doughty skeptic seldom attempts to explore. Religion *per se* is kept at the front, and challenges, but seldom receives, direct attack. It implies that the future world will be but a more full development of the truth, the wisdom, the virtue, the knowledge, and the worship of God, which have their beginning in this. Thus the evidence on which the Christian's faith rests is a part of the Christian's daily life—it is a conspicuous item of his experience—and every part of this wide field invites the attack of the skeptic. Why leave all these important

matters untouched, and assail us with fancy flights of rhetoric and lava-like invectives, which signify nothing?

§ 4. IF INGERSOLL IS A MODEL MAN, CHRISTIANITY
MUST BE FALSE.

In principle and judgment he is one thing, and Christianity is another. He looks upon the world as self-originated, a thing of chance, without law, deserving to be reprobated; and, if created, as the work of an "infinite fiend." The moral world he ignores; denies the freedom of the will and man's responsibility. For virtue and vice he has neither praise nor blame, as both are the results of necessity. This world and this life only are deserving of attention, and not a ray of light penetrates the grave.

Where is the proof that this man is endowed with the wisdom and virtue which we should accept as the standard by which all things else should be tried and judged? If his mind is as broad as the universe, his decisions just, and his feelings correct, then the conclusions he draws from the Bible and nature, that the world is without a Moral Governor, may be accepted as legitimate. In its last analysis, the question comes to this: Either Ingersoll on the one hand, or the teachings of nature and religion on the other, must be declared bankrupt and worthless. The doctrines of both can not pass as sound in this world, to say nothing of the next. To appreciate

fully his position we must bear in mind that he is as much the antagonist of the religion of nature as of the Bible, and, fundamentally, for the same reasons. Are not his conceptions of man and government low down in the scale of morality? Would he not carry us back a thousand years, into some half-civilized land, for models of excellence, and thus reverse the wheels of evolution? Till the skeptic, by a life of unselfish devotion to the good of humanity, shall furnish us much additional proof of his wisdom and superior virtues, we shall decline to accept him as the oracle of the nineteenth century.

The administrative elements of government are many, like the strings of a harp, and it seems that our skeptic, led by his impulsive passions, has seized upon the one to which his nature most readily responds, and with its monotonous tones has tried to drown the music of all the rest. To have a just conception of either God or nature, they must be seen in their relations to each other and to man. A judge would not long be tolerated who, in passing sentence, never consulted the safety of society, the facts of testimony, the law in the case, his oath of office, or sense of justice, but in a weak and flabby spirit yielded, in the decision of the case, to the sympathies he might have for the guilty party; nor a surgeon who would yield to his feelings of pity, and allow his patient to die before his eyes, when the use of the lancet might have saved him.

§ 5. THE MENTAL CHARACTERISTICS NEEDED IN
THIS DISCUSSION.

The subject is of vast extent, and demands the calmest consideration. Even when feeling and passion are quiescent, and intellect, girded round by the laws of logic, is fully in the ascendant, there is still danger that our reasoning, because of the presence of illegitimate factors and the absence of such as are germane to the subject, may be fallacious; but how much greater the danger of error where the mind is hurried to conclusions by the rush of tumultuous passions! Structurally, intellect was made to think, and it is correlated to truth. To the healthy mind there is in truth a kind of self-evidence—a taste, a relish, peculiar to itself. To be a ready recipient of truth, the mind must be calm and serene, like truth itself; then, between the two, there will be an attraction, an inspiration, and an affinity. Truth is never in a hurry, never noisy, never boisterous, and never vindictive. Gentleness, simplicity, and an air of conscious strength, are essential characteristics of the real, the great, and the good; and error is the most fully exposed by placing it fully in the light of truth. Truth inspires its possessor with confidence that, by its own might, it will win its way.

The infidel writer is unknown to us who discusses the subject of religion in this spirit. It seems that argument is dull business, and skeptics become interested only when the subject is carried

into the region of invective and scorn. Then, as armed gladiators, they assail it as if they felt that they must slay or be slain. More frequently Ingersoll, especially, turns satirist and scoffer; but whatever the weapons he uses, religion is assailed as if it were an enemy that had done him harm and was still threatening him with greater injury. He is, however, in his way, an intensely religious man, but embittered and angry because he can not smother his feelings and annihilate his interest in the subject. But the salt is there still, though it has lost its savor, as an egg is an egg though it has lost its health. Were his skepticism a matter of mere intellectual conviction, he would, on all occasions, calmly reason upon this theme, and expend his wit and satire upon less serious subjects. As a consequence, we find nothing new in all he has said. Not in his writings can an objection to Christianity be found which had not, like burnt powder, spent its strength before he was born.

§ 6. BOLD ASSERTIONS NOT TO BE SUBSTITUTED FOR
CANDID CONVICTIONS.

Colonel Ingersoll gives us proof in abundance, that he is not susceptible of being deeply impressed with the abstract idea of the Infinite. He associates the idea with time, space, number, force, etc., and regards the term as belonging to a variety of abstractions. Then with the same breath he says (Letter to Judge Black): "What

we know of the Infinite is almost infinitely limited;" and yet, on the basis of this "limited knowledge," he denies that a God can exist who possesses infinite attributes. He seems to stagger a little at the boldness and inconsistency of his own language, and adds: "But little as we know, all have an equal right to give their honest thought." Can a man honestly think he has a judgment on a subject in regard to which he confesses that his knowledge is "almost infinitely limited?" Headstrong and irresponsible boldness will incline him to talk, but prudence and candor would incline him to say, modestly: "I do not understand the question. My powers are inadequate to grasp the Infinite. I can not go far in any direction without confronting the Infinite; and, on the instant, I am arrested, and can go no further. The abstract infinities, we know, may point to a Being in whom all infinity is concrete." This man is really trying to change the sentiment of the world, and blight the fairest hopes that ever animated the human heart; and yet he seems to be devoid of all sense of responsibility in the matter of expressing a baseless opinion. He is as loquacious and as ready in his popular lectures to call forth the shouts of the rabble against the deepest interest of man in himself and in his eternity as in the most trifling affairs of the day. The fact that his knowledge is "almost infinitely limited" in regard to these things, that what he says will contain but an

infinitesimal portion of truth at best, and that the false doctrine he inculcates may do a vast amount of harm, makes no difference with him ; he wants to talk, and he will talk. It is for these reasons that the noisy demonstrations which attend his lectures amount to nothing. The furor over, it is found that the truth stands as firm as ever. In ignorance of the tone of public sentiment, he thinks he has suffered by expressing his "honest opinion" in the past, and now seems bent on revenging on society the consequences of his own folly.

§ 7. IN THE ABSENCE OF PRINCIPLES, THE ARGUMENT VARIES WITH THE CHANGING MOODS OF THE SKEPTIC.

The little reptile known as the chameleon has a way of impelling to the surface a new color with every breath, thus conforming in appearance to its environments and eluding the greed of its pursuers. So, in the absence of fact and law and principle as a guide, the infidel is at liberty to express his feelings to suit the ever-shifting circumstances in which he may be placed. As a brother at his brother's grave Colonel Ingersoll said : "We cry aloud, and the only answer is the echo of our wailing cry." The infidelity which held sway on this occasion was the *feeling* of sad despair. On another occasion the language used was as follows : "The dream of immortal life has always existed in the heart of man, and

will remain there in all its matchless charms." Another *feeling* here expressed contains the element and a prophecy of a life in another world.

These diverse utterances may serve as samples of the different forms and colorings infidelity may assume as the occasions may change and the moods of the skeptic may vary.

I am aware that, in a general way, I am dealing very freely with Colonel Ingersoll himself; but I judged it best, at the commencement of this discussion, to analyze the man, to present a correct picture of him personally, and detect in his make-up and habits of thought, as far as possible, the ground of his Atheism; for an Atheist he is. We have done this from the consideration that his skepticism is without a solid foundation, to the extent that it is rooted in his perverted feelings, or his misapprehensions of the truths of either nature or the Bible. So far as his infidelity is subjective, it should have no influence in shaping the views or life of another.

As we now advance in the discussions, our representations will be amply verified in his own words, and it will seldom be necessary for us to go further than his letters to Dr. Field and Mr. Gladstone. As he plays but one string of the harp of both natural and revealed religion, we get the same music at all his performances.

CHAPTER V.

THE IDENTITY OF THE ARGUMENT AGAINST CHRISTIANITY AND PAGANISM.

THESE things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself, but I will reprove thee and set them in order before thine eyes.

—PSALMS.

§ I. THE POSITION OF THE ATHEIST STATED.

As the representative of the infidelity of the day, it is due to all concerned that Colonel Ingersoll be permitted to formulate the accepted creed. He says: "I regard *all religions* either without prejudice or with the same prejudice. They are all, according to my belief, devised by men, and all have for a foundation ignorance of this world and fear of the next. All the gods have been made by men. They are all equally powerful and equally useless. I like some of them better than I do others, for the same reason that I admire some characters in fiction more than I do others. I prefer Miranda to Caliban, but have not the slightest idea that either ever existed. So I prefer Jupiter to Jehovah, although perfectly satisfied that both are myths." (Reply to Manning.)

The sweeping character of this Atheism deserves special attention. "All the gods have been made by men;" that is, there is no God; the sup-

posed gods are myths, and an inferior place is assigned to the mythical God of Christianity. The different forms of religion connected with these myths occupy the same plane of ignorance and fear. We are asked to believe that all nations, in all ages, and especially the most intelligent, as the Greek and Roman, have been given to worship and religious observances, and yet that this phenomenon, the greatest element of human life, has no root in reality; that *at base*, the most positive and affirmative factors in the world's history, there is no reality—all is nonentity! The discovery has just been made that man, the necessary worshiper, has nothing to worship.

§2. IN THIS SYSTEM OF ATHEISM, OBJECTIONS TO THE BIBLE OCCUPY A SECONDARY PLACE.

Because a specialty has been made of the supposed "mistakes of Moses," the impression has gone abroad that upon these this system of Atheism is based. This is a mistake of the people, and it has brought upon the Bible an amount of odium and vituperation which was not intended for it. The skeptic deserves credit for going further than Moses in laying the foundation of his unbelief. He had become an Atheist from other considerations—from the study of the world itself—and a great parade is made of the "mistakes of Moses," because the Jewish lawgiver assumes the existence of God as a self-evident truth. Having failed to recognize God as the author of nature in

his true character, the infidel is unable to interpret the wrongs, the crimes, and the miseries of earth as consistent with his attributes of infinite wisdom, power, and goodness, and hence he is led to deny his existence. We would call special attention to this phase of the question, because it serves as the ground-work of the whole discussion, and will receive much attention in the pages which are to follow. In truth, this treatise owes its existence to the discovery that no one of the replies made to Ingersoll, so far as examined, accepted his challenge to give to nature an interpretation which would at the same time be consistent with the facts of observation and the existence of a God of infinite perfections. Let it, then, be constantly borne in mind that, in this controversy, the Bible occupies but a secondary place.

The following is Colonel Ingersoll's challenge for proof that a God exists: "Does history show that there is a moral governor of the world? What witnesses shall we call? The billions of slaves who were paid with blows? The countless mothers whose babes were sold? Have we time to examine the Waldenses, the Covenanters of Scotland, the Catholics of Ireland; the victims of St. Bartholomew, of the Spanish Inquisition, all those who have died in the flames? Shall we hear the story of Bruno? Shall we ask Servetus? Shall we ask the millions slaughtered by Christian swords in America? All the victims of ambition, of perjury, of ignorance, of superstition and re-

venge, of storms, of earthquakes, of famine, flood, and fire?"

It will be noticed that "storms" and "earthquakes," "famine," "flood" and "fire," "ignorance," "ambition," "perjury," "superstition," and "revenge," are classed together as facts of nature, and as phenomena which prove that the world is without a "moral governor." In this connection no reference is made to the Bible, or even to the "mistakes of Moses." Nature is interrogated, and it is understood to give answer that there is no God, and that the world is a thing of chance.

§ 3. THE INFIDEL'S CONCEPTION OF WHAT THE CREATOR AND GOVERNOR OF THIS WORLD WOULD BE DID ONE EXIST.

Judging from his feelings what he, himself, would do were he God, the skeptic is sure that everything would be so managed that happiness, and only happiness, would be the result; hence, in the face of the facts of sin and suffering which confessedly exist and ever have existed, he abandons the problem of God's existence, and takes refuge in Atheism. Were he to admit that the world has a Creator and that a system of government prevails, he would not permit himself to see any *force* or *energy* in it but the exertion of one, personal, arbitrary power as the direct and immediate cause of all that takes place. If the earthquakes; if volcanoes spout their cataracts of lava; if islands sink in the ocean; if tidal waves roll and

smite the shore; if cities topple to their fall; if the cyclone sweeps over the country, or the lightnings smite man or beast or building; if the pestilence visits the people, or if anywhere there is ruin and wretchedness, it is because the Governor of the world finds pleasure in the miseries of its inhabitants. He breathes, and the poison of his breath breeds disease, and in every house are found the dead and the dying; he opens his hand, and the deluging floods sweep over the face of the earth, leaving behind it a track of ruin; his wrath kindles the fire, and cities are carried off in smoke and flame; his ire burns, and nations meet upon the battle-field, and

“How the red rain makes the harvest grow!”

he withholds the rain or sends the frost, in mere spite or ill-will, and famine stalks abroad throughout the land; he envies the people their life, and how the grave-yards grow! he puts avarice, lust, ambition, perjury, envy, hate, deception, injustice, pride, and superstition into the hearts of men, and thus this Infinite One becomes the real author of the manifold wrongs and sufferings which they inflict upon each other. His favorite work may be seen in the prison, the lazar-house, the asylum, on the fields of Wagram, Waterloo, the Wilderness, Gettysburg, and wherever the demon of destruction has held high court. The world of matter and men are alike passive in his hands. He is the sole energy of the universe. Every thing and every event must be regarded as an exact expression of

his will; especially must the whole catalogue of human crimes and sorrows be held to be the proper exponents of his character. Such a creator and governor he would regard as an "infinite fiend," or as "the god of hell;" and because he can not believe in the existence of such a being, he is an Atheist.

§ 4. ATHEISM THE OUTCOME OF PAGANISH CONCEPTIONS OF GOD.

The truth is dawning upon us that this Christian land is not so far from the heathen world as we may have supposed. Let one spend a day or so in the study of the *Iliad* and the *Æneid*, and thoroughly refresh his mind with the conceptions of the divinities there set forth—Jupiter, Juno, Janus, Vulcan, Mars, Bacchus, etc.—and he will see but little, if any, difference between the mental and moral state of the heathen poets and the American philosopher. The poets seemed to possess a measure of faith, reverence, and devotion; the philosopher none.

Or, if we pass over the mountains and mingle with the millions of ancient India, study the Veda and Vedic literature, till we can drink of the spirit of that ancient worship, and become familiar with the gods to whom they offered sacrifice—Varuna, Indra, Agni Dayus, Murats, and all others known to the Pantheon—we shall be conducted at once into the line of thought and feeling which forms the basis of this modern

Atheism. In fact, Ingersoll's conception of Christianity would be a caricature of either Greek, Roman, or Hindu Paganism. The conceptions of Zeus-Pater, or Jupiter—that is, Heaven-Father—which those peoples formed, are purer, higher, and more worthy than he can form of the Creator of the world or the God of the Bible.

In those far-away ages the Pagan knew so little of the inherent forces of matter and laws of nature, that in his attempt to account for the least of the phenomena of nature he was compelled to call in the agency of some supernatural being. When he saw the black cloud come up out of the ocean and stretch out its wings over the vast plains of his country, attended by lightning, thunder, and terrible winds, then pour its deluging rains upon the earth, he could do no better than imagine that Murats, Agni, Indra, and perhaps some other gods, were performing their legitimate work of mercy and vengeance. *Ætna* and *Vesuvius* were the chimneys of the forges where *Vulcan* made thunderbolts. *Neptune* ruled the sea, and the wild waves were expressions of his wrath. As each one of the forces of nature, great and small, was personified and deified, the gods of the nations in number and variety were abundant, and the Pagan prepared his sacrifices accordingly. It is, on the supposition that a God exists, in this channel precisely that the mind of the modern skeptic moves—belated, unfortunately, four thousand years.

§ 5. THE DEATH-BLOW TO POLYTHEISM.

The first verse in the Bible was written to expel from the mind the idea of a multiplicity of gods. "In the beginning God"—the one God—"created the heaven and the earth;" and the creator must also be the governor of the world. All other gods are thus rendered superfluous and abolished. If, then, there is no such god as Vulcan, earthquakes, volcanoes, and lightning-bolts must be accounted for otherwise than by invoking a divine agency; if Varuna be not a god, then the wide expanse of heaven can not be looked upon as a supernatural presence; and if Neptune be a myth and not the god of the sea, it will be useless to offer sacrifices to him. The powers of these supposed gods Colonel Ingersoll *can not part with* and retain the idea of the existence of a Divine Being. In the solution of the problem it seems that at one period of his life he accepted the God of revelation as the aggregation of the powers of all the gods which had been abolished, and as the result he found that he had in hand an "infinite fiend," and then he abolished this himself.

It is worthy of note that science and philosophy have done valiant service in the war which religion has carried on for ages against idolatry. Without the aid of Vulcan and Neptune we can now account for the volcano and the storm. As science has done so much by its interpretations of nature to remove from it the super-

natural element, it is not strange that bold thinkers have inquired if it would not yet be found to contain within itself a full explanation of all its phenomena. Were such an end desirable, science has already, in the discoveries it has made of purpose, will, design, and wisdom in the mechanism of nature, done too much to admit of its possibility. The proposition that the general course of nature is an expression of a pre-existing intelligence is susceptible of absolute demonstration. In the unity and harmony of the wisdom displayed, adapting means to ends and conserving force, we see that there can be but one God. Along these lines of thought anatomy, botany, physiology, chemistry, geology, and astronomy have poured their separate floods of light, and greatly aided in the demolition of idolatry or polytheism. Revelation led the way, declaring that there was but one God; and science followed, making manifest the truth.

§ 6. THE REAL BATTLE-GROUND OF MODERN ATHEISM.

Can there be one God of infinite perfections who can, with reason, be accepted as the creator and governor of the universe, as we see it, and of which we form a part? Such is the question before us. The infidel answers no; and assigns as his reason, that such a God would create a world of absolute perfection, free from crime and misery. The pagan would answer: There are gods many,

some good, some bad, and each creates and governs according to his own nature. The reasons for both answers at base are the same; namely, that crime and misery, as well as virtue and happiness, must have a divine origin if a God exist.

Any creed or philosophy which requires us to believe that God, if there be a God, is the author of sin, necessarily leads to Atheism. We find in nature what appears to some people to be an avoidable mixture of good and bad, order and disorder, right and wrong; and these things, by identifying God and nature, or excluding the possibility of a perfect God, lead to Atheism. Thus, in a series of negatives, mostly inferences from hypothetical premises, Atheism assumes to exist wholly outside of the Bible. Were it not that people generally accept the Bible as true, it would not be deemed worthy of notice.

§ 7. AT THE BASE OF THIS INFIDELITY THERE IS
NOTHING NEW OR STRANGE.

It must be confessed that, for many generations past, the philosophy and theology which have been current in the world—which have swayed the minds of men in the academy and the sanctuary—have been identical with the base of Atheism as it exists to-day. The difference between theoretical Atheism and Christianity has been the difference between two inferences from the same premises. The question both parties

had to answer was this: Can the one God be the author of all things? The Atheist said, "No; for there can not be a God if he is the author of sin and misery." The Christian said, "Yes; but the deep things of God we can not understand." The one class became bold scoffers; the other devout, blind worshipers. Even up to this day, God is regarded as all-comprehensive, all-embracing, in bulk and number infinite; and we are charged with Atheism if we question such nonsense. The Christian philosopher Lotze has spun and spread these notions out into a system of philosophy which he regards as a microcosm. He first substitutes the extreme abstraction infinite for a personal God, and its "activity" is the universe. Hence each phenomenon the world presents is a divine act. The good and bad alike have a divine origin.

The same history, the same outward array of facts, is presented to both the infidel and the Christian. In regard to the moral character of the facts presented there can be no room for dispute. The Christian philosopher accepts the God represented by the evils, crimes, and miseries of earth; but the infidel rejects him unless, as he says, "he is to be regarded as the God of hell," "having the supposed character of the infinite fiend." With neither of these classes of thinkers can we agree, and yet we sympathize with the misfortunes and miseries of both. Unfortunately both are alike oblivious to the essential principles

of the moral government of the world. The key-stone to that arch is wholly lacking in both systems of thought. Were we compelled to accept the premises of the philosophers, we should yield to the conclusions of the Atheist. It would not be possible for us to believe in the existence of a God whose character and will were represented by the sins and miseries which compose so large a part of human history. Such a distortion of both God and nature as this theory implies is worse than Atheism.

§ 8. THE OBSERVED FACTS OF NATURE SHOULD BE INTERPRETED IN THE LIGHT OF ITS CONSTITUTION.

In the fact that in this world we meet with nothing that stands isolated and alone, everything being related to something else, there is positive proof that Nature is governed in accordance with a constitution which is an expression of its laws and the relation of its parts. In its investigation, therefore, there is much which demands attention besides God as *cause*, or things simply as *effects*. The constitution of both the physical and moral worlds, and their relation to each other, need, in this connection, the most careful consideration. Without controversy, this is a world of sin and suffering. Instead of attempting to throw a veil over this phase of human life, in no other volume that was ever written are the

facts made so conspicuous and impressive as in the Bible. The problem how they and an infinite God can exist at the same time we are compelled to look fully in the face. It does not suit the plan of this work to discuss that question now—later we shall attack it—as we are now simply in search of the basal elements of infidelity; and we desire to set forth fully, without any break, the important fact that it is rooted primarily in the *observed* and *misinterpreted* phenomena of Nature, not in its *constitution* nor in the Bible. Were the Bible as free from flaw as a diamond, it would have no bearing on the question. That was settled outside the Bible, in part, as follows:

“Here is a world in which there are countless varieties of life. These varieties are, in all probability, related to each other—everything devouring something, and in its turn devoured by something else; everywhere claw and beak, hoof and tooth; everything seeking the life of something else; every drop of water a battle-field; every atom being for some wild beast a jungle, every place a Golgotha; and such a world is declared to be the work of the infinitely wise and compassionate.” (Letter to Gladstone.)

Mind, Colonel Ingersoll is not referring to the “mistakes of Moses,” nor in any way criticising the Bible. He is impeaching the authorship of that older volume, the Book of Nature. He first denies a creator to the physical and moral worlds,

and the above graphic picture is given of animal life to show that its author can not be God, and thus to enlarge the basis of his Atheism.

The questions here suggested are of wide significance, and should not be settled in haste. The point to be considered is that of relationship. If the world was created on the principle of the production of the highest and best—"the survival of the fittest"—it may be that the dependence of one animal upon another for food, in some cases, was the only method which would produce that result. We assume that such was the case, as we can conceive of none better; and the skeptic was bound, before denouncing what is, to point out a wiser way.

We can not deprecate too earnestly the policy of judging the universe from isolated items, taken up here and there, and considered out of all their relations. Such conceptions of the world and its government are narrow, imperfect, and fundamentally wrong. The wiser way is to examine each part in the light of its relations to other parts and to the whole.

CHAPTER VI.

A FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF ATHEISTIC THOUGHT.

THE owlet Atheism

Sailing on obscure wing across the moon,
Drops his blue-fringed lids and shuts them close,
And hooting at the glorious sun in heaven,
Cries out, Where is it? —COLERIDGE.

§ I. NATURE PRIMARILY THE BASIS OF INFIDELITY.

As we advance in this discussion it should be constantly borne in mind that the form of Atheism we are considering has no essential connection with the Bible; that it is the outcome of a narrow and imperfect reading of nature, and nature was before the Bible; and that the assault upon the Bible is made as a personal luxury, that a previously established position might be maintained. It is supported first from supposed flaws in *material* nature; then its basis is enlarged and strengthened by a consideration of the *animal* creation; and, finally, the sinful and wretched condition of man is brought forward as proof that there can be no God.

By putting together, in a heterogeneous way, fragments of Scripture, relics of the prehistoric age, geologic records, and scraps of history, Ingersoll favors us with the following as his portrait

of humanity. If, first of all, poets and painters put themselves into the productions of their genius, we may expect to see in the following picture the Atheist himself. He says: "Jehovah prepared a home for his children,—first, a garden in which they should be tempted, and from which they should be driven; then a world filled with briers and thorns and poisonous beasts—a world in which the air should be filled with the enemies of human life; a world in which disease should be contagious, and in which it was impossible to tell, except by experiment, the poisonous from the nutritious; and these children were allowed to live in dens and holes, and fight their way against monstrous serpents and crouching beasts; were allowed to live in ignorance and fear; to have false ideas of this good and loving God—ideas so false that they made a fiend of him; ideas so false that they sacrificed their wives and babes to appease the wrath of this imaginary monster." (Letter to Gladstone.)

It will be noticed, in the sketch above given of the creation of the world, that man, as well as beasts, briers, and thorns, is represented as having always been a passive creature, and that his miseries are considered as an exact expression of God's will and pleasure in regard to him. If, because of crime, a man is compelled to flee from society to save his life from the vengeance of the enemies he has made, it is assumed that an unkind God, if there be a God, has driven him from his

home, and if the guilty creature is unable to find a place of safety from his outraged and relentless pursuers except in dens and caves, where he is compelled to fight his way against monstrous beasts, it is also the unprovoked wrath of a "monstrous God" that is pursuing him. It is quite likely that the Troglodytes, or the cave-dwellers of France, were the fragments of a once prosperous people, whom the fortunes of war had reduced to such an extremity that they could find safety only in concealment. The homes of the ancient cliff-dwellers of Colorado and Arizona were selected for a similar purpose. And who are the low, wretched Fuegians, but the last perishing fragment of a people which vengeance, just or unjust, drove from the milder climate and the more generous soil of Patagonia?

It is held by the scoffer that in all such cases as those mentioned the Creator, and not the creature, is the responsible party. Is the man honest? Is it possible that he believes himself? Is not his language a deliberate attempt to impose upon the ignorant and the credulous? If the man is sincere, has he not become the victim of perverted, morbid feelings, and of the grossest misconceptions? or is he simply trying his hand at caricature as an amusement? The god which nature reveals to the wayward imagination of the Atheist is gluttoned with satisfaction at the sight of the degradation and the miseries he describes. Is this a true rendering of the testimony nature

gives in regard to its maker, if a maker it have? Because Ingersoll can not believe in the God he describes, he can not believe in any. His conception of a God is that of an anthropomorphic being, who is a very bad man, with powers enlarged to infinity. This impression is formed, not from reading the Bible, but from the study of nature. The picture I have transcribed is his masterpiece. It is an epitome of the world he lives in. It is the ground of his Atheism.

§2. ATHEISM IS A MISCONCEPTION OF THE FACTS OF NATURE.

Well, Ingersoll can not reject the god of his imagination more energetically than we do, and we think he does well to call it a "myth" and a "monster." If he thinks he is talking about the God of the Bible, the Being who "sitteth in the heavens shall have him in derision." How perverted must be one's mind, what a desert his moral nature, who can give birth to such an atrocious character when thinking of the Creator of the world we live in! Nothing more hideous has ever come to us from Aztec orgies, or from the smoking altars of Baal, the meanest of all the gods of heathendom. We are not sure whether these conceptions of the Infinite and Holy One are the creations of a perverted judgment, or whether they spring from a wayward fancy and a depraved heart.

Or has the skeptic been imposed upon in his readings, and sadly misled by them? He writes as if his mind were thoroughly steeped in the mythologies of India and Greece and Rome, and of the ancient Northmen. Has he been reading the Edda, the Veda, and other sacred books of ancient nations, as if they were authorities in religion? If so, did he regard what was there said of Thor, Woden, Janus, Zeus, Ormuzd, Agni, and Murats as referring to the God of nature? At every turn we are compelled to note the fact that in spirit Ingersoll is an unbelieving Pagan. His real brother in faith is an educated Hindu, or Goth, who has rejected Brahmanism, or the worship of Thor, and is in ignorance of the Christian conception of the world. If in any ancient heathen land one were born in squalor and reared in want and misery, and had to contend with thorns and briars, and suffer from contagious diseases; if doomed to live in dens and contend with poisonous serpents, it was supposed that the unfortunate creature was pursued by Nemesis, or some other vengeful god, who delighted in his misery. Exactly Ingersoll's conception of the Creator and Governor of the world. This feature of heathen mythology, strange as it may seem, is read into both nature and the Bible, practically excluding the true spirit of the Scriptures. The whole is then judged by this accretion from without.

§ 2. A MISCONCEPTION OF PROVIDENCE TENDS TO
ATHEISM.

Colonel Ingersoll gives us another installment of perverted views of God and nature as follows:

“Why should an infinitely wise and powerful God destroy the good and preserve the vile? What do I mean by this question? Simply this: The earthquake, the lightning, the pestilence are no respecters of persons. The vile are not always destroyed, the good are not always saved. Why should Jehovah allow his worshipers, his adorers, to be destroyed by his enemies? Can you possibly answer this question?” (Letter to Gladstone.)

Such are the profound conundrums Ingersoll propounds to Gladstone; but we can see nothing in them but his ever-recurring heathenish conceptions of the Almighty. The god of his imagination is a Vulcan, an Agni, or some other force of nature personified. If a worshiper of Mars were killed in battle, a worshiper of Neptune might rail at the war-god, and drown his fleet because he was not true to his friends. In ancient times the worshipers of Juno and Jupiter had occasion to blaspheme each other's gods *à la* Ingersoll. So coarse and gross are Ingersoll's conceptions of things divine, that in case of an earthquake engulfing the inhabitants of towns and cities, he conceives God to be a sort of Vulcan, swinging a sledge-hammer and smiting the

cavernous sides of the earth in spite and wrath, as when a bruiser smites a fellow-being on the skull with a bludgeon; and so indifferent is he to character or to friends that he does n't think of them, but allows them to perish with the vile and with his enemies. Let it not be forgotten that the Bible is not brought into this argument, as the conceptions of God are all drawn from what is observable in the natural world. If when the earthquake prostrates the city, God would send a squadron of angels to pick out the "good" and "his friends," and carry them away to some place of safety a few days before the judgment fell, he would believe in him. How many would thus be carried away before the vile would feign repentance and promise reformation? What would Colonel Ingersoll do as he felt the ground tremble beneath his feet? Would he not affect a little piety?

If a passenger-train, freighted with the vile and the good, were likely to plunge into the gulf below whilst passing over a badly built bridge—the law of mechanics having been violated in its construction—that there might be proof satisfactory to the skeptic that a God exists, he would have him either support the bridge till the train had passed over, or, if the vile must perish, take the good out of the car windows, carry them home again, and not allow them "to perish with the vile." Such a God would be worth having.

It can not be denied that God has often permitted his enemies to destroy his worshipers—

"his adorers"—and this is thought to be the mystery of mysteries. "Can you possibly explain it?" he asks Mr. Gladstone. The reply, if one has been made, we have not seen; but we answer, Because it is wise to do so. The most useful period of Bunyan's life was the twelve years he spent in the Bedford jail. Paul was never more useful than when a prisoner at Rome. The death of Stephen opened up a visible pathway to the better land. God takes some in mercy to the heavenly country, and spares them the evils of this world. When Paul died it was better that he sacrifice his life for the truth a thousand times than that the truth be sacrificed to save his life. Bare existence is not the chief good. In the absence of principle and honor, it is not worth having.

Some may think we are ungenerous, if not unjust, in speaking of Ingersoll as a Pagan. When first we noticed the application of this title to him by the secular press, we attached but little importance to it, as we took it to be mere banter or pleasantry; but our study of the man, and of the reason he gives for his Atheism, has made it clear to us that, in the name of Christianity, he is really hurling his shafts of ridicule against the mythical gods of ancient heathendom. The gods of the Iliad and of the Veda are far nearer his conceptions of what the Creator should be than the God which is revealed in nature and the Bible. Ingersoll combines the civilization of the

nineteenth century with the Paganism of twenty-five centuries ago, and now labors to slough off the religious element.

§ 4. AS THE CONSTITUTION OF NATURE IS PERFECT,
IT WILL NOT ADMIT OF CHANGE.

Nature is a unit; its innumerable parts go to make up a grand whole. If our minds were sufficiently capacious, it is likely that we could see that not an atom could be changed or destroyed without affecting the whole.

In the following language the Atheist betrays his narrow conceptions of the constitution of nature by suggesting certain changes and improvements, whose scope and bearing he utterly fails to comprehend. He inquires: "Would it not have been better had the world been so that parents would transmit only their virtues—only their perfections, physical and mental—allowing their diseases and vices to perish with them?" (Letter to Gladstone.)

Why so modest—why stop here? Once in the business of suggesting improvements of the order of nature, a multitude of points might be touched to advantage. "Would it not be better if the world had been so" that a part had been equal to the whole, then all would have had an abundance of everything; that a straight line carry us around a curve, and thus often shorten the distance; that the sun had been so constituted that it would give us the balmy air and a world of vegetation, but not the tornado nor the deluging flood; that rocks

had been so that when in a wall they would be hard and heavy, capable of immense resistance, and then, in case one should fall on a child, a woman, or a man, become light as cotton? How easy for infinite wisdom, power, and goodness to have made these provisions for human comfort, and save life, especially that the good might not perish with the vile! As all these things have been neglected and are different, how can it be that the world has a "moral governor?" How can it be that the God of nature cares for one class more than another, since he "allows his enemies to murder his adorers?" Why did he not add: The gods of the Iliad, the Veda, and the Edda "stand by their friends better than that." He says further: "Never will I worship any being who added to the sorrows and agonies of maternity." What! do you believe that that has been done by the God revealed in the Scriptures? If not, why say anything about it? We suppose the inference is that, as such, a God can not exist.

In this department of life many improvements might be suggested. Why was not the good woman so constituted that in child-birth the painful travail would be dispensed with, that whilst the child lived she would be supremely happy in her love for it, and that in case of its death her joy would be increased as she gazed upon its distorted features in the midst of the agonies of dissolution? Had the world been thus created, what an untold amount of sorrow would have been

avoided and happiness secured! But as such is not the world, if it has a creator, he must be an "infinite fiend."

Could anything but malignity have made iron so hard, mixed it with other substances, and hid it away from the eyes of men in deep, dark, damp mines, requiring toil and sweat and suffering to procure it? Benevolence would have made it soft, light, and pliable, till wrought into nails, horse-shoes, chains, bolts, and engines, and then caused it to become hard as adamant and as enduring as the ages. Why was not the human body so constituted that it could be susceptible only of pleasure? Why was not man created with a temper which would act only wisely, and remain quiescent, except when its gratification would be beneficial? How easy thus to have saved the world from the violence which has done so much to make creation groan beneath its burden of miseries! An Infinite Creator must have foreseen the consequences of his acts, and certainly a wise and good Being could not have been the author of this world!

Suggestions of this kind might be multiplied *ad infinitum*; but they serve no purpose except to make apparent the shallow, surface views the skeptic entertains of nature. Its constitution and government by law—unchangeable, because founded in infinite wisdom—he does not consider for one moment.

To keep clearly in view his line of thought, we

must regard the god of his imagination as the direct and sole cause of all that is. As a personal gratification he causes the crimes and miseries of the world, inflicts the pains of maternity, causes fire to burn the flesh, kindles a fever in the blood, and plants the slow-consuming cancer on the lip, and in a multitude of ways causes humanity to suffer.

Is it not clear that Atheism can do no more than find fault with what is, and suggest possible changes, but is utterly incompetent to reconstruct the constitution of nature so as to make it harmonize with the principles implied in the changes? As it is not possible for us to lose sight of this fact, we can not regard his criticisms of nature as of any value, or his sweeping conclusions as of any consequence.

As his blasphemies refer to the god of his imagination, and clearly indicate that he has in mind the mythologies of Greece and Rome far more than the religion of Christ, they have ceased to affect us further than to excite our pity.

What once touched us as the trenchant utterances of an earnest man, now appear to be but a flood of rhetoric, thinly spread over an immense surface, and we feel sure that it will have but a transient effect upon the citadel of truth. "We can do nothing against the truth," said the Great Teacher. Christ's conception of truth seems to have been analogous to the chemist's conception of matter. He would no more attempt to change

or destroy an atom than pluck a star from its sphere. Truth, in the world of truth, is as indestructible as is matter in the world of matter. Matter evinces its power of resistance and endurance by continuing to be, amidst incessant change, what it has ever been; and the tests and trials to which truth has been subjected, prove that it possesses an equal tenacity of being. A proper conception of the nature of truth as a part of the constitution of nature, is enough to banish skepticism from the mind.

“Truth crushed to earth will rise again;
The eternal years of God are hers.”

CHAPTER VII.

THE CORRECT INTERPRETATION OF NATURE DISSIPATES ATHEISM.

THE heavens are a point from the pen of his perfection;
The world is a rose-bud from the bower of his beauty;
The sun is a spark from the light of his wisdom,
And the sky a bubble on the sea of his power.

—SIR E. JONES.

§ I. THE CONSTITUTION OF MATTER.

It seems to be a little paradoxical that an infidel should make an appeal to Nature for proof that it is without a Creator, but so it is; and the case is made the worse by the affirmation that this fair world would be a disgrace considered as the workmanship of any being except an "infinite fiend." Nature, then, should be interrogated, and allowed to speak for herself in regard to her substance, constitution, and laws. The world of matter, the source of poisons, earthquakes, tornadoes, storms, and pestilences will first receive attention.

It has ever been the custom of Christian as well as skeptical writers to cast opprobrium upon all kinds of matter, the precious stones and metals excepted, as being gross, coarse, and an impediment to the spiritual elevation of man. We hold that in this statement there is not only no truth,

but that it is slanderous. Matter should be thought of only as matter, and as such it is absolutely perfect. We utterly repudiate the metaphysical conception of the mathematical point as a center of force considered as the atom, for it contains no truth whatever. Logic will not permit us even to *think force* with nothing to exert it. We hold the atoms to be entities, individuals, self-centered, self-contained, and sources of energy,—in the aggregate the energy of the physical universe. Each kind of matter—as iron, gold, carbon, sulphur, etc.—is exactly adapted to the end it was intended to accomplish, and nothing else should be expected of it. The excellency of each kind of matter, and of different kinds in combination, may be seen not only in their capacity to act, but in the limitations of their capacity to do specific work. The conception of an atom as a substance without properties or energy is inadmissible.

§ 2. THE PERFECTION OF MATTER DEMONSTRATED.

But it may be asked, Can matter as a poison, destructive of life, human and animal, be considered as perfect and good? Let us see; and we may as well take prussic acid, one of the most deadly of poisons, to aid us in an elucidation of the subject. This poison is composed of carbon, hydrogen, and nitrogen—very abundant and common kinds of matter. The nitrogen forms a little more than three-fifths of the air we breathe, and

without it animal life would perish from the earth. Perfect in itself, it is also perfect in all its relations. Any change in its nature would affect the whole globe in many respects, and especially as a place of human habitation. Carbon constitutes a large part of the substance of the organic world, vegetable, animal, and human, and any change in its nature would disturb all its relations to other substances, and probably reduce the earth to a desert. Hydrogen is an abundant element, one of the components of water, and constitutes about one-twentieth part of the globe. Any change in its nature would modify, if not destroy, the waters of the globe, and radically disturb many other departments of nature. Then to render impossible the existence of prussic acid, it would be necessary to change the nature of either nitrogen, carbon, or hydrogen, and thus destroy the air or the water and the organic part of the world.

But the infidel will inquire, If there be a God is not he, as the Absolute One, the force or energy of nature? and if so, why in prussic acid should he take on the form of a deadly poison? We deny that God, in any sense whatever, is the force or energy displayed by this poison, or that he is the force of any other material substance. To meet this element of pantheism, we have identified the atom of matter as a substance clothed with properties of its own and endowed with energy. The physical energy of the universe, as

now displayed, originates in the atoms. That God created things so to be, does not change existing facts. Rather the facts stand because they were made to endure. If the God of nature deserves reproach because poisons exist, he incurred it by giving perfection to the primary elements of the material universe. The elements of all poisons are as good and perfect as those described.

§ 3. APPARENT EVILS MAY BE AN ABSOLUTE GOOD.

And are we sure that even the possible existence of poisons of all kinds known to us was not suggested by wisdom and beneficence? They occupy an important place in manufactures, trade, and commerce, and, with an increase of knowledge, their usefulness, especially as medicines, may be largely extended.

Chlorine forms a part of our table-salt, and yet if we unite it with hydrogen, a component of water, we have a deadly poison; but we would not think of changing or destroying these elements for the sake of rendering impossible the existence of muriatic acid. In many particulars this compound is of great service to man.

Carbon, oxygen, and hydrogen, combined in different proportions, give us alcohol and sugar; but nature furnishes the sugar ready-made in the juice of the grape, cane, beet, and maple, as it is one of the harmless essentials of human comfort. Now, because alcohol can be mechan-

ically produced, abused, and made the source of misery, shall the nature of these substances be changed and the good they contain be sacrificed? As nature *is* in this respect, can not we see in it an expression of beneficence?

Carbon and hydrogen give us the newly discovered oil—or rather, the re-discovered oil, for Job was an oil prince, as the “rock,” he said, “poured me out rivers of oil”—which a wise Providence had concealed deep down beneath the surface of the earth. But the skeptic may inquire, Would it not have been better, a saving of immense labor, and just as easy for the Infinite One to have caused the oil to flow on the surface of the earth like water? We answer, No; for in that condition, exposed to the action of the air, it would not long have continued, because of the slight affinity which its two component elements have for each other. In that condition the hydrogen would have escaped, leaving the carbon a solid mass. Should we so change the nature of the hydrogen that its affinity for carbon would be increased to the extent necessary to preserve the oil in the open air, we should thereby destroy the waters of the globe and do a multitude of mischiefs.

To change some of the elements of a kind, and not all, would be to multiply the kinds of matter, and throw the world back into its primitive chaotic state.

Carbon, hydrogen, and nitrogen, united in cer-

tain proportions, form dynamite. It is a little remarkable that nature has no process of forming this compound. It can, however, be mechanically done, and the substance is then useful for the purpose of blasting rocks, blowing up fortifications, etc.; but suppose some man—anarchist or crank—shall wickedly make use of this compound to blow up a parliament, a senate, or a city, and destroy the lives of thousands of people, shall the nature of these elements be brought forward as proof that, if there be a God, he must be an “infinite fiend?”

Animal and vegetable matter, while going through the process of decay, sometimes collects in open sewers, the atmosphere of cities swarms with the invisible microbes which are generated, the people inhale them, the pestilence breaks out in the form of yellow fever, and hundreds or thousands are carried to the grave. To avoid this calamity, shall the animal and vegetable worlds be abolished? or shall everything, as it dies, become mummified or fossilized? No, neither would do. The interests of the world demand decay. A yellow fever and a conflagration are alike matters of law, and we can get up, and run into, either. When the people, through indolence, allow the air of their city to become impure, it will work itself right, though they have to suffer while the process is going on.

Should we subject the sixty-five or seventy kinds of matter known to the chemist, to exam-

ination, we should find that each kind for the purpose of its existence is perfect—absolutely perfect. Will the champion Atheist step to the front, and try the strength of his rhetoric on the imperfections of the constitution of matter? This is a field which should long since have engaged his attention; but, as an impulsive man, it *suits his feelings* better to rail at nature as a whole, and make sport for the rabble over the “mistakes of Moses.”

As law arises from the nature of the things governed, and is, to some extent, an expression of their essence, it follows, therefore, that the laws by which matter is governed are also perfect. The properties and forces of each kind of matter are the true and only expression it can make of its nature, and they constitute the law by which it acts and is acted upon.

§4. THE PLAY AND INTERSECTION OF DIFFERENT KINDS OF MATTER.

It is probable that there is not an atom in the universe which is not subject to the law of affinity and repulsion. Oxygen seems to hate fluorine, though, as an unlimited flirt, it is in love with everything else. It is the constant action and reaction of these forces which generates the physical energies of the universe—earthquakes, cyclones, floods, as well as the milder aspects of nature.

By interaction the properties of different kinds

of matter mutually modify each other, and develop others which were not inherent in either in separation. The terrible force generated by sulphuric acid does not pertain either to oxygen or to sulphur. Gravitation or attraction, the force which every atom exerts upon every other atom, is an influence which comes upon it from without; otherwise all its forces are developed from within. A molecule of water is the *sum* of two united substances—two atoms of hydrogen and one atom of oxygen—and also of the united forces they mutually exert upon each other in forming the union. Though the compounds which may thus be formed are unlimited in number and variety, they all take place under the sway of laws which, like Him who ordained them, know “no variable-ness nor shadow of turning.” It is probable that the least change in the essence of any kind of matter, followed as it would be by a modification of the laws of its action, would be attended by greater calamities than have been produced by all the earthquakes that ever shook the earth.

Such is the constitution of nature that water may be changed into steam, and the process necessarily involves the development of force, the amount depending upon the quantity of water transformed. Now, should some considerable river find its way into the vast, deep caves of the earth, and there come into contact with extensive and unquenchable fires, an earthquake might be the result. To avoid the shock, shall we take from

water its evaporating and expansive property, and thus change the constitution of nature? In that case there would be no clouds in the sky, the refreshing showers would not fall, and vegetation would die. We hold, then, that the world we have is as good and as perfect as it is possible for the human mind to comprehend, or to conceive a world to be. It is one thing to rail at nature, and another to suggest changes which would not be for the worse.

§ 5. MATTER, *PER SE*, THE SOURCE OF ENERGY.

But we shall be asked by both infidels and Christians: Is not God the energetic and active part of the universe? Is it not his power which develops the acorn into the oak? Is not he the life of the plant, the worm, the reptile, the bird, the beast, and man? Is he not the energy which causes the atoms to unite and form compounds? Are not the new and strange forces which they develop divine forces? Are not gravitation, attraction, and affinity the forces of the Infinite? Are not all kinds of matter mere dead, inert, passive substances? Is not bare existence all that can be predicated of it? Are not all activities mere modifications of the divine activity?

All these questions we answer in the negative. God is God, and his personality forms no part of the universe he made. He is the ever "I Am." What he *is*, he ever *was*. Matter, with its properties, forces, and laws, is no part of his being; it

is matter, and nothing else—a part of what he created.

If we would avoid the form of Atheism known as Pantheism, these distinctions must be sharply made and ever borne in mind. Unless we can conceive of God as a personal Being, having a distinct individuality of his own, and as no part of nature or of its forces or laws, there is nothing to be found in religion which is of any consequence.

Along this line of thought—blending God and nature into one, after the style of Malebranche—Christian authors have, for centuries, poured forth a flood of pious nonsense, which has done much to lead the world astray, and drive the thinking portion of it into some form of infidelity. If Atheism consisted simply in denying that the force we meet in prussic acid, in the poison of a rattlesnake, or in the sweetness of sugar, or the light of a lamp, were divine forces, then should we take our stand in the ranks of Atheists. If faith in the existence of God implied that God, in the physical world, *is* gravitation, *is* attraction, *is* repulsion, *is* its cohesive or explosive power, *is* also the diverse energies developed by chemical changes, then, also, must we take our place in the ranks of the Atheists. It is a psychological impossibility to believe in God as a personal God unless we distinguish sharply between him and the things he created.

But how can mere matter possess properties

and energy? Because its Creator saw proper to invest it with the properties and energies it now displays. The whole material universe *is* as we find it, because God saw proper to make it *to be* so. Could a solitary atom be placed so far away from all other atoms as not to feel the force of their existence, it would be practically passive; but its latent energy would become active, either attractively or repulsively, on the approach, within its influence, of any other atom. Or, could all the different substances of the universe find a condition of stable equilibrium, passivity would be the result. As it is, elemental strife is the actual condition of the matter of the universe, and the *forces in action are its own*.

§ 6. THE EXISTENCE OF A UNIVERSE OF THINGS
DOES NOT INFRINGE UPON THE BEING OF GOD,
BUT SERVES AS A REVELATION OF HIS POWER
AND GODHEAD.

But how can God be thought of as infinite, as absolute, all in all, and unconditioned, if there be any other self-centered, self-contained being, endowed with attributes and energies of its own? We reply: God is a spirit, *divine* in nature or essence, and neither bulk nor number nor time nor space sustains any relation to him whatever. God is no part of the universe he created; as the only divinity, his realm is all his own. What he *was* before creation he *is* now. The energies displayed by the vast physical world help us to our

most elevated conceptions of the infinite energy of the Creator of all things. In the act of investing beings with life and things with energy, he parted with none of his own.

Had the skeptic been less general in his onslaught upon nature, had he specified more fully particular imperfections and the causes thereof, and had he suggested the remedies for these defects, we should find ourselves in a better position to render him assistance. Have we a kind of matter which he regards as superfluous, or can he conceive of a kind we have not which should have been created? The accusing critic of nature should be more specific in his charges. An intellect of sufficient strength to grasp the universe, would probably perceive that each atom stands related to every other atom—as neighbor to neighbor—and that not one could be destroyed without disturbing the whole and leaving it imperfect.

The Atheist, practically, first becomes a Pantheist—identifies God and nature as one—then misreads nature; and on the basis of his misapprehensions of its contents and laws, proceeds to read God out of it. But what does all this signify but ill-tempered, carping criticism? As sober argument, intended to adjust the affairs of one's eternity, it is unworthy of man. It will be well for us to become familiar with all the methods adopted by skeptics to subvert the truth, as the variety of shifts they make weakens their cause.

We may still further expect, if a querulous

disposition leads to a savage assault upon the order and wisdom of nature for the purpose of eliminating from the mind all ideas of a creator and governor, that the Bible will fare no better at the hands of the skeptic. In the absence of candor, truth is likely to be greatly disfigured, if not driven from the arena. Probably the document was never written whose meaning the genius of man could not pervert. Lawyers have bent and twisted the American Constitution into a thousand shapes, and grave judges are not always agreed in regard to its meaning. It is to be expected that the man whose spite and spleen touch the heaven and the earth and the things under the earth, for the purpose of banishing their Creator, will reserve especially the hot shafts of his ridicule for the lawgiver and the prophet who would retain his p̄sence. It is alleged that Moses, in his writings, made "mistakes;" and, also, that God, in his works, exhibited the character of an "infinite fiend." If this judge of God and man made a mistake in regard to the one, is his opinion to be trusted in regard to the other?

CHAPTER VIII.

NATURE'S INTERPRETATION OF ITSELF IS NOT
ATHEISTIC.

THE seasons came and went, and went and came,
To teach men gratitude; and, as they passed,
Gave warning of the lapse of time, that else
Had stolen unheeded by; the gentle flowers
Retired, and, stooping o'er the wilderness,
Talked of humility and peace and love;
The dews came down unseen at eventide,
And silently their bounties shed, to teach
Mankind unostentatious charity. —POLLOK.

§ I. THE SKEPTIC AVOIDS DISCUSSING THE CONSTI-
TUTION OF NATURE.

Atheism is based on the conclusion that the imperfections of the world demonstrate that its Creator—if the existence of a Creator be admitted—must be lacking in wisdom or power, or that he is an “infinite fiend.” To make good this terrible charge, nature should have been subjected to the most comprehensive examination, and a possible world, embracing more wisdom and benevolence than this, pointed out to us. In all our reading of skeptical works we have met with but two suggestions even looking in this direction, and these could be carried into effect only in the absence of all law.

Why do skeptics thus so slightly pass by the

most essential features of their case, and leave their main charge without support? It is not enough to refer to a few scattered, *isolated facts*, that may have an ungenerous look; but, as philosophers, they should have instituted a thorough examination of the *constitution of nature*, and favored us with the proof *it* affords that, in the absence of fundamental law, its different parts have been thrown together in a hap-hazard way. As the question is left, one is compelled to believe that, for some occult reason, which perhaps it is cruel to inquire into, the structure and laws of nature were not considered in this connection. We must say, however, that this was a grievous oversight. Called to the witness-stand, nature, under the most thorough cross-examination, should have been allowed to testify for herself, as her evidence in this court is the best the case affords.

The Bible does not attempt to prove the existence of God; it accepts, as conclusive, the evidence afforded by nature; and if the testimony derived from this source is in favor of Atheism, its voice must be considered as decisive. We demand, then, that nature, as the principal witness in the case, be called back, and that its testimony be heard. We are aware that it will be difficult to hold Mr. Ingersoll up to this line of investigation, as his deeply human *feelings* incline him to dwell upon the "mistakes of Moses," and these act as a red flag to excite his anger and start the flow of his rhetoric.

§ 2. NATURE AFFORDS PROOF THAT ITS STRUCTURE
IS CONSTITUTIONAL.

The skeptic, by persistently refusing to see, in the government of the universe, any agency or law or energy but the personal, arbitrary power of God, actually blinds his mind to the truth in the case. We are again reminded that he occupies the stand-point of an ancient Pagan, but devoid of the Pagan's faith. He has no place or work for God, except that of ruling the world as a player handles his men upon a chess-board. Unless he can see God in such position and with such work in hand, he is not able to see any.

But nature, testifying for herself, declares with the greatest emphasis that at base she is, in every substance, unchangeably fixed; and that in her respective departments, by the manipulation of different elements, she is capable of endless modifications. From the beginning, the different kinds of matter, and of life and mind and spirit, have been fundamentally exactly what they are now; and the eternal future will fail to witness any change in the essence of any substance. This happy combination of permanence and change carries us into the realm of the infinite, both of wisdom and beneficence. Without this basal element of fixity, the world could never have emerged from chaos and night. Creation implies not only a Creator, but that he created something, created it in some way, gave it a certain character, and

such as we see before us is the character of the world under consideration.

§ 3. ANY COLLISION OF PARTS WITH THE FIXED ELEMENTS OF THE CONSTITUTION OF NATURE CAUSES CONFUSION AND TROUBLE.

The sciences of arithmetic and geometry are based upon the laws of the measurement of time and space, and the least violation of their laws—as that two and two make five—carries havoc into the conclusion. Is it cruel, or wise and beneficent, that this should be so? In the absence of the unchangeable law of numbers, could these sciences exist? How could nature, in this respect, be changed for the better, since as it is it expresses the exact truth and reality of things? Does not a positive fault lie at the door of the party who committed the blunder? Does not the voice of nature, as an *oracle in him*, so declare? But the Atheist's notion seems to be that if there were a God he would, in the spirit of benevolence, in some way interfere with these figures, and control the outcome of man's carelessness.

There is, as a part of nature, a system of law known as mechanics, and its imperious demands can not be violated with impunity. In building a machine, or a house, or a bridge, any departure from the laws of this realm are sure to result in the weakness, if not in the failure, of the structure. In the stability and imperious character of these laws we may see two things: they express

the reality and fitness of things, and also reflect the unchangeable character and authority of God. In case a railway bridge is built in violation of mechanical law, and it tumbles into a gulf as a train is passing over it, maiming and killing divers persons, whose is the fault? Such was the constitution of nature that the bridge *could have been* strongly built and the calamity avoided. What does this fact indicate? In the constitution of nature, in all its departments, from the lowest to the highest, it appears that RIGHT is something so great and so good that observing it is attended by the best possible results, and that a VIOLATION of the right is followed by consequences correspondingly terrible. As a palpable fact of nature, it pours a flood of light upon the nature and scope of its constitution. Could an infinitely wise Being, if actuated by the spirit of beneficence, have given to nature in these respects, for the benefit of intelligent creatures, a different constitution?

§ 4. ATHEISM CAN EXIST ONLY IN THE ABSENCE OF LAW AND GOVERNMENT.

But the Atheist will demand that, if there be a God, he should interfere at the right moment, and avert the consequences of the blunders of his children. As he does not do this, but allows the consequences of the violation of mathematical, mechanical, physical, and moral law to follow, though the results are often dreadful in the extreme, nature affords no evidence of the existence

of God as moral governor of the world. Should he, at the right moment, interfere and arrest the falling scaffold of a building on which mechanics were at work, and let it softly down to the ground, then retire, such interference would afford the skeptic the kind of proof he desires that a God exists. His conceptions of God and the world are so fully those of a Pagan, that the idea of government by law—law that is constant and universal in its application—seems never to have entered into his mind.

Should God interfere with the administration of law as the freaks of his subjects might dictate, how would it be possible for us ever to understand the constitution of nature so as to conform our conduct to it? In the absence of uniformity in the affairs of the world, its thoughtful inhabitants would never know what to depend upon. Could more conclusive evidence be produced that the world was without a governor than such irregularity and uncertainty would furnish? How, then, can we account for the stability of the constitution of nature, the limitless sweep it takes, and the infinite variety it produces, only on the hypothesis that it is under the sway of an almighty moral governor?

Therefore, in the absence of all affirmative positive truth, Atheism is without a foundation of its own, and the whole weight of the testimony of nature is against its demands. The world as he would have it would be scarcely hab-

itable by either man or beast. As environments often widely differ, the conditions of life in one case would be death in another. Nature, in proclaiming herself something stable, orderly, and uniform, abolishes Atheism with its chaos, and proclaims a Maker of infinite perfections. A God who exists as a convenience to correct mathematical blunders, strengthen badly built bridges, and modify on occasion all the laws of nature, is not the being Christians worship.

We can discover in some minds a mental peculiarity which would tend to this conception of God and nature. Some people are inclined to look at all things in the concrete, and abstract principles make but the slightest impression upon them. The little such people can see of nature with their eyes in broad daylight is real; but the idea of an underlying constitution, manifesting its provisions in law, is quite another and a very hazy thing. Unless they can see a personal government, they can not see any. This defect of intellect is largely at the root of Ingersoll's Atheism.

§ 5. IN THE CONSTITUTION OF NATURE, NECESSARY FACTS OCCUPY A CONSPICUOUS PLACE.

Time and space must be infinite; a circle and a square can not possess a like figure; swift must be the antithesis of slow, long of short; and it is absurd to suppose that these diversities of existence can be otherwise. Could we see the whole

universe as it is, forming a correct idea of the essence of every substance, we should probably discover that every atom of every kind of matter and every form of life, from the beginning till now, had acted according to the law of necessity. It will be noticed and remembered that we limit the action of the law of the inevitable to the material and vital worlds. Further on, and in another connection, we shall have much more to say on the subject.

Broad views of the universe will clearly recognize these facts, accept the universe we have as an inevitable result of law, and, as far as we can judge, an expression of infinite wisdom, power, and goodness. Let us suppose the law of necessity were repealed, and that this were liable to become that; long to become short; a circle to become a square; gold, iron; a diamond, a pebble; and that this kind of uncertainty everywhere prevailed,—would not earth become a Babel, incapable of habitation? But if the world is right as it is, and I carelessly mistake a circle for a square, a wrong for a right, an error for a truth, the consequences of my blunders, it matters not how terrible they may be, I must endure; and I can not complain, for the fault is my own. We can not too deeply feel the necessity of conforming to nature; as nature, being right, will not vary an iota to conform to us.

The goodness as well as the greatness of nature are seen in the fact that it is always true

to itself, regardless of the consequences of collision with it. A misplaced six-penny nail once so influenced a mariner's compass that an ocean steamer was turned out of its proper course some hundreds of miles, and came near being dashed to pieces upon an unknown rocky coast. Had it been wrecked, and all on board perished, whose had been the fault? Which reflects the greater credit upon the Infinite One, and which is of the greater practical value to man,—a world that can be known and depended upon with absolute precision, or a world of "luck and chance?"

Touching this point, the argument of the infidel would take this form: 'That such dangers might not arise, if a God exist, he should change the constitution of nature so far as iron and the magnet are concerned, and adapt them to that voyage, and then change them back again; or it might do in some way to interfere with either the nail or the compass, or pilot and guide the vessel directly into the intended harbor; but as nature is not modified to fit or to counteract a blunder, therefore it is clear that there is no God.

The conceded fact that the good often perish with the vile, shocks the maudlin sensibilities of the Atheist beyond endurance. It is here that Colonel Ingersoll finds his strongest argument. But, as usual, he reasons as a Pagan. God may be infinitely compassionate, and yet refuse, because it would be cruel, to sacrifice the constitution of nature to fit some special emergency. The

momentary good done would be no compensation for the evil. The pestilence, the earthquake, winds and waves, fire and flood, things of necessity, do not possess the moral element, and they have no more respect for character than they have for persons. If this world were so that when a vessel in mid-ocean were smitten by a hurricane, its Governor would make of it a sort of judgment-day, separate the "good" on board from the "vile," his "adorers from his enemies," and in a chariot carry them away to some place of safety, then the skeptic would be a believer. On the battle-field he would probably demand that an angel be sent to attend and guard all the good against bursting shell and flying bullets. All such conceptions of the government of the world are in harmony with the mythology of all nations, but they have no place whatever in the religion of either nature or the Bible.

§ 6. THE EXCELLENCY OF THE CONSTITUTION OF NATURE IS SEEN IN THE FACT THAT OBEDIENCE TO ITS LAWS SECURES THE HIGHEST GOOD.

Man stands related to physical, organic, mental, and spiritual law, and nothing higher and better can he attain unto in this life than conformity thereto. He is also related to an external world as his environments, and this also rests on a basis of law. These various relationships are complex in the extreme; and yet, when all are

properly adjusted, there is perfect harmony. Man has an eye for the light, an ear for sounds, a taste for flavors, a sense for odors, a finger for touch, a stomach for bread, lungs for the air, a mind for truth, a conscience for duty; and thus his relations are so numerous and intimate that he, in an important sense, is a counterpart of the world he lives in. The one is correlated to the other, and both are embraced in the constitution of nature.

On the supposition that a God exists as Creator and Governor of the world, does not the disposition thus made of man reflect the highest credit upon his wisdom and beneficence? Another step must be taken in this argument before its full force can be seen; but at this stage it is clear that if obedience to law—the laws of his being and the laws of nature—secure to man his highest possible good, then this world should not be called the work of an “infinite fiend.”

Law serves as the connecting link between God and man; in its highest realm it is the spiritual atmosphere in which both live and have their being; and heaven can be nothing more than the perfection of that relation. In his relation to man, God dwells in the law of love, and, for all we know to the contrary, it may be quite as agreeable to him to dwell also in the law of gravitation, affinity, understanding, and every other law of the universe. Were our spiritual vision clear enough we might be able to see that God's *rela-*

tion to law foreshadowed the incarnation. In the light of these suggestions the multitude of encomiums pronounced upon Law in the Psalms are made to signify much. Many expressions would not be out of place if applied to God himself. Government by law is the mode of the divine administration.

CHAPTER IX.

THE TESTIMONY OF NATURE TO THE REIGN
OF LAW.

THE laurel wreath the murderer rears,
Blood-nursed and watered by the widow's tears,
Seems not so foul, so tainted, and so dread,
As the daily night-shade round the skeptic's head.
—UNKNOWN.

§ I. GOD REVEALS HIMSELF THROUGH NATURE TO
HIS CREATURES.

As modern infidelity is largely the result of mistaken interpretations of the facts of nature, necessity constrains us to follow the skeptic into this field of inquiry, correct his mistakes, and exhibit the proofs of God's handiwork. It is certainly his right to assail the citadel of religion at what he may regard as its most vulnerable point, and compel us to repair, if we can, any breaches he may be able to make in its walls. With the duty thus imposed upon us of reading a few pages of nature's volume, considered as a divine revelation, we find no fault, but rather confess ourselves pleased with the entertainment to which we are invited.

Consider the spirit in which we should enter upon this investigation. From our stand-point we can not but regard the world as the first and oldest channel through which God revealed himself to

men and to all other intelligences. The heavens declare his "glory;" "his eternal power and godhead are seen in the things he has made;" and as we reverently turn over the leaves of this book, we may expect to sweep by a range of truth which embraces things adapted to the simplicity of a child, to mysteries no human mind can fathom. Go which way we may, but a few steps will be required to take us to the borders of the infinite; but this will not surprise us, as "his wisdom is unsearchable, and his ways past finding out."

§ 2. THE SUBSTANCE OF NATURE IS COMPOSED OF
VARIOUS ELEMENTS.

Comparatively but few people are accustomed to the study of nature, and the terminology of the sciences is anything but inviting to people generally. Current infidelity demands that this obstacle be overcome, if we would not leave it undisturbed in its stronghold. In the little we shall be required to do, in tracing the marks of the Infinite One in nature, technical and abstruse terms, as far as possible, will be dispensed with, as we do not wish to teach science, but discover the reign of law in nature.

By created nature we should distinguish:

1. The earth, the planets, the sun and stars, and the whole material world with its forces and laws.
2. The vital world, embracing everything that lives, whether vegetable, animal, or human.

3. Man, considered as an intellectual, moral, and religious being.

4. The *relations* which subsist among the different departments of the universe should receive special attention.

As many Atheists have made these departments of nature a study, and in many respects failed to grasp the lessons they teach, but rather have perverted their meaning, it becomes our duty to traverse the same ground again, and as far as possible secure the true interpretation.

Nature, considered as a whole, is a unit, yet the above named separate and distinct realms must be noted. Each has a character of its own; the one never invades the domain of another; and yet each is correlated to some other. Remove the world of matter from biology—also from metaphysics, as should be done—and examine it solely *as* matter, having properties and forces exclusively its own, and it can, in part, be understood. When *blended*, as is often done, instead of related to other spheres, it proves to be a disturbing element, and creates such wide-spread confusion that nothing in regard to it can be distinctly comprehended. Often vitality is ascribed to matter, and all sorts of philosophers talk about “living” or “live” matter. Not an atom of either living or dead matter ever existed. It is not proper to say that anything is dead which was not once alive. Life and death are terms which should never in any way be applied to matter—unless under poetic

license. The vital world, also, should be examined solely in the light of its phenomena; but this can not be done except everything not vital be excluded from the investigation. Only in separation from everything else can we see the vital or organic world as it is.

The crowning glory of created nature is the human *mind—the man proper*. The relation these separate departments of nature sustain to each other is a very important but a *separate* question. A fundamental principle in regard to them is, they never cross the lines which separate them from each other, nor do they in any way run into each other. Each remains what the Creator made it and where he put it.

Here, again, we run afoul of the utterly fallacious principle which lies at the base of the popular work known as “Natural Law in the Spiritual World.” Certainly, law prevails in the spiritual as in the natural world, but it is not the same law, unless the substance of the two worlds is alike—both matter or both spirit. Every law is an expression of the nature of that which is governed. Matter has its own laws, and it knows no other; life has its laws, and only within the limits of vitality can they act; mind has its laws, and they act only in the realm of thought, will, and feeling; and the laws of the spiritual world, as such, arise from the nature of spiritual beings. God and his acts embrace the supernatural—God and nature the universe.

We hold that these things are so because the Creator saw that it was wise so to make them; and that they might remain as created, he ordained that out of the nature of each thing, from the atom to the archangel, should arise laws expressive of its nature, and by which it should be governed. An Intelligence, subject to *moral* law in all matters of right and wrong, is placed under the law of necessity *to determine WHAT his conduct shall be*, as in selecting the seed he will sow he also decides what the harvest shall be.

§ 3. THE CONSTITUTION OF NATURE IS AN EXPRESSION OF THE DIVINE WILL.

Such is the nature of the sun and of the atmosphere, and of their relation to each other and to the configuration of the globe, that their combined influence on occasion produces the tornado and the flood. These untoward events are mere incidents, and it is the will of God that they take place rather than that the constitution of nature be changed, for that could not be changed except for the worse. The narrow and shallow conception of the skeptic regards every little local trouble as an expression of divine wrath, if the existence of a God be admitted.

A little consideration of nature as under law will give us quite a different conception of government, and dissipate these crude notions. Taking chemistry as our guide, we find in the physical world some seventy different kinds of matter

whose entity and individuality are found in inconceivably small atoms—atoms which chemists think are less than the millionth of an inch in diameter. Each atom of a kind is an exact duplicate of every other atom of that kind, and in essence utterly unlike every atom of every other kind. Each atom has properties of its own as an individual thing, and is a center of force. Among different atoms play the forces of attraction and repulsion, resulting in the formation of innumerable compounds of an indefinite number of kinds, and the force of gravitation is common to all atoms and masses of matter.

So far as we can detect among these atoms of matter the reign of law, we shall grasp the wisdom and behold the will of God; and we may expect that the investigation at every step will conduct us through realms of the infinitely mysterious.

In a drop of water there are probably not less than ten millions of molecules—the smallest particle of water that can exist—and each molecule is composed of one atom of oxygen and two atoms of hydrogen. All the waters of the globe, whether in the form of a liquid, or vapor, or ice, are formed of these two substances. It is not claimed that all water has been examined, but a violation of the above law was never known. What but the wisdom and power and goodness of the Infinite One could have given us the waters of the globe by placing under the domain of law atoms of

matter so small that no instrument has been able to discover them, and never made the mistake of an atom?

§ 4. BENEVOLENCE OCCUPIES A CONSPICUOUS PLACE
IN THE DIVINE PLAN.

A view of the practical results of the reign of law indicates wisdom and benevolence. As the constituent elements of water are incapable of change, it is the same everywhere, is now what it has ever been, and it must ever remain the same thing. We trust the stability of water more fully than we do Gibraltar's rocks. We have no more fears that a drop of it will be changed into a pebble or sulphuric acid than we have that the sun will cease to shine. If caprice and change everywhere prevailed, what would be the effects upon man's well-being and upon every department of the world? What if, in sailing around the globe, the gallant ship should find itself in mid ocean caught fast in the clamps of solid granite rock, or, afloat on billows of oil, driven forward by cyclones of flame! Or would the Atheist, regarding the world as a thing of chance, if a thirsty traveler away in the desert, dare to drink from a bubbling spring for fear that in his stomach the water might turn to an alkali or to muriatic acid? Or would it not be nice for the clouds occasionally to pour down inky torrents, or, in defiance of all prohibitory laws, deluge the earth with spirituous liquors?

Both Scripture and geology teach us that there was a time when the solar system was in a state of chaos—"fire-mist," if you please—a nebulous cloud, occupying as much space as is now included within the orbit of Neptune. And what has wrought the change adapting it to the wants and convenience and comfort of man? If you say law, then you must hold that associated with law there was infinite intelligence, beneficence, and design.

If instead of law and order everywhere, the Atheist could designate this and that as positive entitative evils, not simply the absence of some specific good, and then could associate these evils with chance events in a happen-so world, he might to some purpose harp upon such confusion, and let flow the tide of his rhetoric to prove that the world is without a moral Governor. But the world he describes is largely the creation of his imagination, and has not the most remote connection with real nature.

§ 5. THE DESIGNS OF INFINITE WISDOM MAY BE
SEEN IN THE REIGN OF LAW.

Let us glance again at government by law. And we select a particle of sugar as our instructor. The molecule of sugar is a very complex vital product. Matter, even with the help of the laboratory of the chemist, has never been able to produce it. If derived from the juice of the cane the molecule is composed of twelve atoms of

carbon (the stuff known as coal), twenty-two atoms of hydrogen, and eleven of oxygen—in all forty-five atoms; and yet the molecule of sugar is so small that it can not be seen even with the microscope. In a drop of sugar-cane water there are probably not less than a million particles of this sugar. Sugar from the juice of the grape differs from cane, in that the molecules contain twenty-four atoms of hydrogen—in all forty-seven atoms. Sugar is made by cane, grape, maple, beet, and many other vegetable substances. It always comes from the tree, root, or fruit, *ready made*, and afloat in a liquid which must be evaporated to secure it.

Look, now, at the infinitely delicate reign of law. A drop of water from the maple-tree contains probably not less than fifty thousand molecules of perfectly formed sugar, formed by the power of the vital part of the tree—a feat the genius of man can not perform, nor can he any more conceive how it can be done than he can conceive of divinity. The atoms, so small that two thousand of them could not be seen if put together in a mass, must all be sorted out and counted or weighed; for each molecule must have its complement of each kind of matter, and no more. In all the world, and through all the ages, there must not be the mistake of an atom. Man can no more count or weigh these atoms, when isolated, than he can count or weigh the stars in the firmament; but the cane-plant always combines the forty-five elements necessary to produce

cane-sugar, and probably it never made a mistake. Grape produces a different kind of sugar, and to do this it puts into the molecule two additional atoms of hydrogen—no more, no less—and never makes a mistake. Here is a work, regularly performed before our eyes, which as fully demands the wisdom and the power of God as the creation of the sun. We say it is the work of law; but what can law be in this connection but the constitution the Creator gave to nature as a part of creation, and as an expression of his power and wisdom? The cane and maple and grape molecules of sugar may not be conscious, but did not conscious thought make them what they are? How could wisdom and power and benevolence make themselves more conspicuous?

§ 6. THE OPERATION OF A LAW OF NATURE HAS BEEN SPECIALLY MODIFIED FOR THE GENERAL GOOD.

So far as our knowledge goes, all bodies, with but one exception, are diminished in size by a lowering of their temperature and enlarged by raising it. Iron, stone, wood, the human body, etc., are larger and longer when warm than when cold. This law seems to pervade all nature till we come to the formation of ice, and then it is practically reversed. A cubic inch or foot of ice is no heavier than it was in a liquid state, but it is larger and demands more space. What are the practical consequences of this strange phenome-

non? Instead of sinking to the bottom of the lake, pond, or river, as it forms, and rapidly accumulating there during a long cold winter in a high latitude, it remains on the surface and serves as a protection to the main body of water from the cold. We seem to have here a special arrangement to prevent the destruction of the globe by the formation upon its surface of an immense ice sheet; for the overflowing waters would fill the basins, river-channels, and lake-beds, flooding the country and forming an ice-cap thousands of feet in thickness, such as now covers the most of Greenland. Engaged with such an antagonist, our summer suns would be compelled, in utter defeat, to withdraw the lines of vegetation further and further south. Could it be shown that there was ever a time when a cubic inch of ice was heavier than its bulk of water, that simple fact would afford a full explanation of the ice-age—those winters of unknown length which, at different periods, held sway from the North Pole to the Equator.

But as the constitution of nature must not be changed, it became necessary for the Creator to resort to a certain expedient to accomplish this result. We have no doubt that a single molecule of ice is smaller than the same molecule would be as water; but, in freezing, the molecule of water freezes, not always to another molecule of water, but to the atmosphere with which it comes into contact, and this, being lighter than water, buoys it up and keeps it afloat on the surface.

As a practical reversal of a law of nature has made room for hundreds of millions of people, even if it has not made the earth habitable by both man, beast, birds, and fishes, are we not justified in seeing in it a token of beneficence? Had these rays of truth from the volume of nature ever penetrated the mind of Colonel Ingersoll, would he have written it that, if there be a God, he must be an "infinite fiend?"

§ 7. THE PLAN DEvised FOR FURNISHING THE EARTH WITH A SUITABLE ATMOSPHERE INDICATES DESIGN AND BENEVOLENCE.

Our air is composed of a mixture of nitrogen and oxygen, a little more than three-fifths being nitrogen. In pure nitrogen man could not live more than one second of time; in pure oxygen he might live a half minute; in a *union* of nitrogen and oxygen—nitric acid—he could not live at all. What was the Creator's device, amidst all the changes the air undergoes in the course of a year or of ages, to preserve the relation of these elements and the stability of the air? In the first place, he rendered a *union* of the atoms impossible, by giving to each such a nature that they could not *unite*, thus practically destroying both and forming a deadly acid in their stead. And then it was important that the proportion of the two elements be preserved; how was this done?

In the first place, nitrogen, the chief element of the air, has such a peculiar nature that it has

no affinity for any other kind of matter. It is the bachelor kind, whose delight is to stand away from everything else, isolated and alone. Being thus utterly discarded by other substances we find it afloat on the surface of the earth. As a gaseous band it surrounds our globe, having a thickness of at least fifty miles. Oxygen, constituting about half the globe, is of such a nature that it can be made to unite with all other kinds of matter except fluorine. This substance is an outlandish flirt, and repulses but one suitor. It is consequently everywhere, forming a part of everything, and what *we* have, *as a part of the air*, is the *surplus* left after everything else was supplied. Then the air we breathe is the result of the operation of two contrary laws of nature—attraction and repulsion. Repulsion gives us nitrogen, and attraction takes from us all the oxygen we do not need.

CHAPTER X.

THE MISERIES OF CRIME PROCLAIM A MORAL GOVERNOR OF THE WORLD.

God, to keep unmarred
Freedom's fair form, lets Evil's frightful hosts
Run riot wildly in the universe. —SCHILLER.

§ 1. IT IS CONCEDED THAT THIS IS A DEGENERATE WORLD.

The *ad captandum* argument that this world of sin and misery can not be the product of a Creator and Governor who is infinitely powerful, wise, and good, is having great weight with ignorant people and with superficial thinkers. But let us, in the light of the constitution of nature, look the facts fully in the face, and see what can be learned from them.

The observed facts of human life accord with the Scripture declaration that "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain;" and in the great cities of the world may be found millions of men and women whose ignorance, brutality, and crimes make them a scourge to society; and they may be taken as samples of untold millions more who live, and have lived in the past, in different parts of the world. Can such creatures lift their eyes to heaven and say, "*Thou*

madest me *to be* thus?" If not, let us consider the question, How came these human beings to be in the degraded and miserable condition in which we find them? We have already been compelled to recognize, as a part of the moral constitution under which we live, physical, social, intellectual, and spiritual law. We have found that law has been wrought into the very nature of things, and it can not be denied that conformity or obedience to moral law is attended by good results; and, if so, then it is *inevitable* that the violation of law, or antagonism to it, will be attended by evil results.

§2. IT IS DESIRABLE, FIT, AND BECOMING THAT MISERY SHOULD BE THE ATTENDANT UPON CRIME.

Is not the thought a frightful one that it were even possible for the outcome of one life of crime and another of virtue to be the same? Were that the aspect of the world—of individuals, the family, society, and nations—palpable to everybody, could not the fact be urged with overwhelming effect as proof that the world was without a moral governor? Would it not tend to abolish, in theory as well as practice, all distinctions between virtue and vice? It will not be denied that obedience to physical law tends to the promotion of health and comfort, and the principle involved makes it inevitable—yes, an absolute *necessity*—that the violation of physical law should damage

the body and produce misery. If I thrust my hand into the fire kindled in the stove, and hold it there till it is burned to a crisp, the fault is mine, and I *must*, as I deserve, suffer the consequences.

In every community social and moral laws are more or less violated; and in the degrading results have the sufferers any ground for complaint? If, in an examination of the slums of our great cities, it should be found that the idle, the profligate, the ignorant, the beastly, the drunken, and the vile of every description were as prosperous and happy as the same number of people in another part of the city, whose lives were directly the opposite, would not the lesson taught by such contrary facts, having the same outcome, tend to abolish moral distinctions, and to establish the rankest Atheism? But the records of humanity do not furnish such a phenomenon. Instances have been known of murderers spending the night before the day of their execution in levity, apparently unconcerned in regard to their fate; but it was apparent that, even though they were hardened wretches, they were acting a disgraceful part. Suited to such a character and to such an occasion is a sense of shame and degradation and fear and remorse. It is only by the presence of such elements of contrition and sorrow that the man can redeem himself in any measure from Satanic characteristics. In tears and grief there may be a beam of hope.

§ 3. AS A PART OF THE STRUCTURE OF THE UNIVERSE, THE CONSEQUENCES OF VIRTUE AND VICE ARE MATTERS OF NECESSITY.

Man has the power to decide *what* his conduct shall be. The consequences after the act is performed are placed beyond his control. On these subjects there is a written law which gives him all the information he needs for the regulation of his life.* But more than this, the consequences of virtue and vice are inwrought into the constitution of each man as an individual, and into nature as a whole, and thus the whole creation is made to carry on its very face the most positive proof that it is under moral government.

It will not be denied that virtue, on the whole, is promotive of happiness, and that vice yields as its appropriate fruit dissatisfaction and misery. Both classes of results are necessary, and each is *becoming* its cause. A righteous man overwhelmed with remorse and agony, and a base criminal exalted with rapture, would indicate insanity; but reverse their emotional experience, and each would appear natural and at his best. In case some one should bring into my presence a group of twenty young men and women, one-half of whom had for ten years been eagerly engaged in the pursuit of learning and the practice of all the virtues of Christianity, and the other half had given no attention to mental improvement, but had abandoned themselves to debauchery, drunk-

eness, and all manner of crimes, is it not clear, from what we know of the effects of conduct upon both mind and body, that I would be able on the instant, from the appearance of the two classes, to distinguish the good from the bad? And could I say otherwise than that it is necessary and wise, and right and good, that each group should eat of the fruit of its own doings? If nature is based on law, and conformity to it results in securing to the one class the greatest possible blessings, then it is inevitable that calamities correspondingly great should follow or attend antagonism to the law. Nature, the Bible, history, and experience unite, and, as with one voice, teach this lesson; and I repeat that it is not more plainly written on the page of revelation than deeply inwrought into the very constitution of man, as a part of nature, that these things *must and should be so*. If doing one thing is necessarily, because demanded by law, attended by blessed results as a consequence, how can the doing the opposite result otherwise than in bad consequences of corresponding greatness?

§ 4. HAPPINESS AND MISERY, IN THEIR COMPLETENESS, ARE SELF-SUPPORTING, AND NOT SUBJECT TO THE CONTROL OF ENVIRONMENTS.

Should a man, as a student of humanity, spend a couple of days in any of our great State's-prisons, he would carry away with him a sad heart, deeply feeling that he had left behind him a pitiable

aggregation of shame and trouble, and he would raise the question in regard to the root and cause of this misery. This inquiry would carry him outside the prison walls to the time and place which each one signalized by crimes, and the man now in prison would appear as but the incarnation of those crimes. What could be more befitting the character and conduct of these prisoners than the misery each one represents; and what would be the impression left upon the mind if, on leaving the prison, it was clearly manifest that the place was one of supreme felicity? Could we resist the conviction that the terms virtue and vice were mere words, signifying nothing, and that the world is really without a moral governor? As a straw, does not the prison indicate that this is a moral world?

But there need not necessarily be misery in a prison. If any form of wretchedness holds sway there, it is because wretched beings were put there. There is often found wretchedness and strife in a palace, and felicity in a prison or a cottage. Character, always and everywhere, holds imperial sway, whether good or bad. If the accused, or even the condemned, can put in the plea of innocence, the conscience and character are preserved, and these serve as a sheet-anchor to the soul; but if conscious guilt is there, no environments, not even heaven itself, could bring a feeling of blessedness. Is not this fact an important element in a moral government? The mis-

eries of vice, if vice exist, form a necessary part of a world which is under moral government.

§ 5. VIRTUE IN THIS WORLD BY NO MEANS EXEMPTS ITS POSSESSOR FROM ITS CALAMITIES.

The ancients, knowing nothing of the government of nature by law, were greatly puzzled by the fact that in some cases the righteous suffered, and the wicked, for a time, triumphed. The entire book of Job is given to a discussion of this problem. Taking a narrow view of nature, the psalmist said: "My feet were almost gone, my steps had well-nigh slipped, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked." After going into the sanctuary, and taking a larger view of the world, he says: "So foolish was I, and ignorant; I was as a beast before thee." What the good man suffers from the operation of the constitution and laws of nature, whether from earthquakes, cyclones, floods, or pestilences, are nothing compared to what he would suffer by the subversion of nature's laws. The value of government as a whole, and to the whole, is of such overwhelming importance that the momentary interests of the individual, it matters not how wise or good he may be, are not allowed to interfere. The truth is, law is a unit, and the whole is affected by the action of any part. But as a whole, in the long run, the entire moral structure of humanity accords with the facts that virtue should be crowned with blessedness, and that crime should be over-

whelmed with misery. In view of the prevalence of wrong in this world, as between man and man, nation and nation, were this a happy world we should doubt the existence of a moral governor. The sight of misery resulting from crime is bad, but it would be more shocking still to see crime crowned with blessedness. Truth required that the fruit harmonize with the tree on which it grows.

§ 6. ALL THINGS CONSIDERED, CREATION WAS A DICTATE OF WISDOM.

We affirm that God's moral nature demanded a moral universe, let it cost what it might, as for its absence there could be no compensation. It was not possible for him to be content with a world of mere physical force and mechanical law. Before him were the possibilities of a universe in which intelligence, and love, and purity, and moral glory might reign as the chief factors for ever and ever. What if some shall refuse to live in harmony with their Maker and with the universe, of which they form a part, shall the highest plane of existence and of blessedness be left empty, desolate, and barren, to accommodate supposed and possible criminals? As long implies short, as wisdom implies ignorance, so the possibility of holiness implies the possibility of sin. Both lines of character originate in the will. Felicity and heaven are therefore results—the results of character—and if there is so much in a good character

that the necessary outcome is heaven, then the absence of such character renders heaven impossible, and hell is but the absence of heaven.

§ 7. THE INGRESS OF EVIL INTO THE WORLD.

Psychology has made clear the truth that all human acts of a moral character originate in the will, and that its action is the key to both moral good and moral evil. Hence, we do not regard the presence of evil in this world as a mystery; but its cause is a palpable fact, and as easily explained as the existence of virtue. The will-originated right act is a virtue, and the will-originated wrong act is a crime and an evil.

As God is a lover of purity, he has made it possible for all persons to be virtuous; but it was not possible for him to put man on this high and awful pedestal of power to determine what his conduct shall be, without leaving with him also the power and possibility to disobey. A constrained act may be practically good, but it can not possess a moral quality; it drops down into the domain of mechanical law. The misery attendant upon a wicked act proclaims the reign of a good as well as holy God.

§ 8. THE PROBLEM OF MORAL EVIL.

Paint the misery and the degradation of the world as he may, in proof that a God does not exist, the Atheist is not able to put his finger upon a *positive* evil in the universe. All known

evil is simply the negation or absence of some positive good. There can be no death where there has not been life. Ignorance is the absence of knowledge. Vice is the failure of virtue. Sickness is the loss of health. As wealth departs, poverty comes in. Every *real*, every affirmative *something* in the world is a good. Each organ in the body, every power of the mind, is a positive good, capable of being used for a good purpose. The moral elements of the world—as intelligence, the power of the will to act rightly, love, conscience, friendship, sympathy, the sense of duty and responsibility—are all positive energies and of commanding influence. Where there is suffering, degradation, and shame, some positive good has been rejected. Were we sure that the analogy was real, we would say that evil is, in the moral world, what a vacuum is in the physical, and that nature abhors the one quite as much as the other. The moral vacuum is not necessary anywhere, for plenitude is a characteristic of the divine government.

§ 9. THE CREATOR'S VERDICT UPON HIS OWN WORK
IS THAT IT IS "GOOD."

What more could the Creator have done for the creature than place him in a world in which there was no positive evil, but which was full of positive good, and endow him with the capacity and power to perceive and appropriate the good? This is what was done; but the low, miserable

man has not been true to his Maker nor to himself. He has violated his conscience; he has slunk away from God into self; he has denied himself the good elements of society and of nature; his grain has been made, not into bread, but intoxicants; and in turning away from the good provided for him, he has become the cause of the incoming and necessary evils of his lot. The murmuring skeptic fails to inform us how an intelligent moral world could have been made so as to exclude the possibility of evil; and look at it as we may, a change of nature for the better is inconceivable.

In Genesis we read that, after the creation of man, God took a survey of all that he had made, and pronounced it "good." This was said in full view of all the possible facts involved in the case. Man, especially, was so placed as to give to his moral nature an opportunity for immediate development, as if that were to be the first care of his life. God knew that the creature was invested with power to refuse the good that was set before him, and that evil would be the result of disobedience; he knew further that the evil would be commensurate with the good rejected; yet, in the face of all the facts in the case, he pronounced everything "good." Had man stood out the day of his probation, and secured the blessings of obedience, the result would have been supremely good; but the coming on him of wretchedness as a consequence of disobedience, was a *necessity*, and, for the universe at large, the *highest good the*

case then admitted. Neither men nor angels should ever be permitted to look upon sin for a moment, only in connection with the horrors of shame, degradation, and misery. A hell of suffering, as the result of vice, is not so shocking a thought as the idea that the least felicity should be the outcome of guilt.

§ 10. THE PROBLEM OF HELL.

The conception of hell is dreadful in the extreme; but any relief from it the mind can find, *except one*, only makes the matter worse. Preserve government by law, and at the same time destroy sin, and there need be no anxiety about future punishment. We hold that heaven is not a state of blessedness arbitrarily dispensed by the Infinite God, but that it is the natural and inevitable outcome of a positive character—a character spiritual and holy. In the absence of such character heaven is an impossibility, because there is no capacity to enjoy it. We make a poor exchange when we substitute a conception of heaven which is either the reward or the result or outcome of guilt—as Universalists do—for a hell which is the inevitable consequence of sin.

It is some relief to know that a lost soul, *in greatness*, is not to be compared to a soul saved. Heaven is reached by a moral ascent in character, and hell by a descent. The “natural man” is wanting in “spirituality,” the highest element of manhood. When spiritual, man is correlated to

God and to a spiritual world. The "natural man" can think and will and feel, but "he can not discern spiritual things, for they are foolishness unto him." To supply this deficiency, Christ came and the Holy Spirit is given. The man who passes into the next world without being quickened into spiritual life, goes simply as a "natural man."

Nero, as compared with Paul, was but the wreck of a man. Whilst the one will shine as a star of the first magnitude for ever and ever, the other will be known, because of his littleness, only as a monumental witness of the inevitable degradations of crime. There will be simply enough of his deteriorated soul to excite shame and contempt. His sufferings must be in proportion to his capacity, and this will be insignificant compared to the greatness of such men as Paul, Chrysostom, Luther, and Wesley. These were full-orbed men; Nero was but little more than the foul blot of what he ought to have been. All carried with them, in their character, the basis of their eternity. The positive good—spirituality, faith, and love—secured to one class an eternity of blessedness; the absence of such good in the other, left in his nature a moral vacuum, with all its attendant wretchedness. The law of cause and effect operated in both cases, and fixed their destiny. Nero's wretchedness, whether considered in its relation to time or eternity, as fully as the blessedness of Paul, proclaims the existence of the Moral Governor of the universe.

CHAPTER XI.

THE PROBLEM OF THE SUFFERING OF THE INNOCENT.

WE have often wondered that grave divines should declare that there could be no natural evil or suffering, under the administration of God, except such as is a punishment for sin in the person upon whom it is inflicted, . . . lest they might strengthen the cause of Atheism.—BLEDSE.

§ 1. A GLAD RECOGNITION OF A TRUTH EXPRESSED BY THE SKEPTIC.

Colonel Ingersoll recognizes a sensitive, vital world, composed of different orders of life; and as suffering is connected with this part of the constitution of nature, it demands a moment's consideration. In this respect, as he is in the line of truth, we gladly give him our company for a little time.

§ 2. THE PROBLEM OF ANIMAL LIFE.

We wish, in this connection, to call special attention to a few crucial facts which characterize a vital world, and to the reign of law in regard to it. That the questions we have in view may be seen the more clearly, we must premise that matter was made to be matter, and that matter it must remain. Men of the highest genius, in different countries, under all conceivable circumstances,

have persistently labored to compel matter to give forth vital phenomena, but all in vain. Pasteur, the first scientist of France, pronounces the theory of spontaneous generation a chimera, and Tyndall says that, as the facts of the case now stand, "life can come only from antecedent life."

It is found that all organic bodies of the high orders are composed of about fifteen different kinds of matter—the most *common kinds* of matter—ordinary dirt. The human body, the bodies of cattle, birds, fishes, crocodiles, worms, insects, trees, plants, and flowers are all formed of this dirt; and as matter can not in essence change, carbon and all the other substances are when *in* the body exactly what they *were out of* it.

As matter was never known to manifest a trace of self-organizing capacity or tendency, the existence of an organic world demands that we postulate for it a cause that is not matter. For iron to come out of a mountain, purify itself, and then work itself into an engine, would be a small, clumsy performance compared to a self-constructed flower, or insect, or man. To affirm that God is the life of organic bodies—of worms, snakes, plants, cattle, and men—is at a single bound to plunge into Pantheism. Hence, necessity is laid upon us, if we would avoid Materialism on the one hand, and Pantheism on the other, to postulate, *as a part of creation*, a substantive vital world as the cause and basis of organic bodies.

§ 3. THE ESSENCE OF SUBSTANCE IS IN NO CASE
SUBJECT TO OBSERVATION.

If called upon to place on exhibition, for the inspection of man's senses, a vital entity, we confess our helplessness—we can not do it. But we promise that we will do it when we shall see on exhibition an entity of matter, or a mind.

We hold, then, that vitality constitutes a world of its own, and that, as designed by its creator, some form of life is the constructor of each organic body. All material properties and forces are wholly foreign to it. It is not in the least subject to the law of gravitation, affinity, attraction, or repulsion. It does not possess the property of extension, nor sustain spatial relations. Solidity, impenetrability, and all other properties of matter, are unknown to life. We are quite as unable to form a conception of its essence as we are of the essence of matter, mind, or spirit. There is not a property or force which is common to both the material and vital worlds. It is a characteristic of all kinds of life known to us to work the few kinds of matter to which it stands specially related into organic structures. All other kinds of matter are discarded by organisms, and some of them—as arsenic—if forced upon either animals or vegetables in sufficient quantities, destroy them. Pure matter can work itself into lumps, stones, liquids, gases, colloids, and crys-

tals; but not the first approach can it make towards constructing an organism, either high or low. The dirt of the street can get up and work itself into the bones, sinews, muscles, nerves, veins, arteries, and blood of the human body, then take to living, then to thinking, as well as any kind of matter can work itself into the simplest insect or plant that exists on the globe.

To obtain an intelligent reading and interpretation of nature, the above stated facts must be duly considered. The persistent but vain attempts which have been made to bring life out of matter have been a painful distortion of the realms of both life and matter.

In a scientific and enlarged discussion of a vital world, we are unable to determine what views Colonel Ingersoll might entertain, as he refers only to the single fact that life devours life, which, in his judgment, discredits the idea that a God exists. He does, however, very properly speak of "varieties of life;" for it is impossible, on any other basis, to account for the different forms of organisms we meet with in the vegetable and animal worlds. We call special attention to this conception of a vital world as a part of the creation of a *living* God, because we take pleasure, whenever the skeptic speaks in the interest of truth, in giving him the fullest credit for it, and we trust that he will never swerve from *the position taken*.

§ 4. THE PROBLEM OF ANIMAL FOOD.

But in the vital world Colonel Ingersoll finds nothing to his liking—nothing that reflects credit upon a Creator. One order of creatures devours another, and then is devoured in turn. Horrible! To understand his feelings, one ought to witness his agonizing contortions when a well-cooked piece of lobster or salmon is set before him. And then animals have “teeth” and “claws” and “hoofs,” and they use them—so Tennyson sang. As such a world is not built in accordance with the pattern he would have suggested, he can see neither the marks of wisdom nor goodness in it.

The order of creation is simple enough, and we doubt if any improvement can be suggested. *Nothing exists for itself alone.* The mineral kingdom gives itself for the support of the vegetable kingdom, the vegetable for the animal, and all for the benefit of man. The order of nature can be neither reversed nor modified. Minerals can not support animal life. Why this is so science, is unable to tell; but the fact can not be controverted. Kingdom built on kingdom, one rising in the scale of being above another and contributing to its support, seems to be the order of nature.

But the shocking fact remains that animals live upon each other; hence the theory of the

existence of an infinite God is inadmissible. Well, the fact can not be denied; and if the fact justifies the Atheism, then we must be silent. At last we have found an affirmative, positive, and undisputed fact or principle, or both, which lies at the basis of this form of unbelief. So much candor compels us to acknowledge, and we do it in the frankest manner possible. *Animals do have teeth and claws, and they devour each other.* That we may see this infidel objection in all its strength, let us carry it a little further. If valid, could we give the grass a voice it might complain that it were not the ox; but really, in nourishing and elevating the ox, the grass secures its own highest possible elevation. Were it not for this great, benevolent beast, the grass would be left alone, to be blasted and destroyed by the frosts or fires of autumn.

The use of animals for food makes it possible for a large district about the poles of the earth to swarm with life, which otherwise would be an icy or watery waste. It is a very pregnant fact that the use of animal food advances, strengthens, and perfects animal organisms, and we can see no utility in the existence of a large portion of the fish in our rivers, lakes, and seas, the fowls of the air and beasts of the field, except as sources of nourishment, each for some higher order of creation. The innumerable forms of life which lie low down close upon the borders of the vegetable world, it would seem, were created especially

for the benefit of higher orders of existence. We can not see that in their life there is much of pleasure, or much of pain in their death, and yet in their existence and the use made of them we do see an uplift of the world.

Had Colonel Ingersoll and his ancestors, for some twenty generations back, fed exclusively on potatoes and cabbage-heads, he would to-day have been more like a goose or a sheep, and far less like the lion that he is. He is indebted to the order of nature which he so soundly berates, for the strength and brilliancy he possesses. Macaulay says: "The potato-fed Irish soldier was never a match for the beef-eating English soldier." In the properly fed and developed man, mind and body are at their best, and the lion-and-lamb nature in peace lie down together.

But right or wrong, these things are so, and most clearly can we see in the vital world the reign of law; hence, as it was made, so must it remain. It is not always easy to decide where the vegetable world ends or begins, but with endless interior modifications it always remains the same at both extremities. Matter can be neither annihilated nor made to live; vegetable life can be neither degraded below nor lifted above its own domain; animal life must hold to the estate in which it was placed at creation; and the infinite realm of thought must ever remain the home of the reasoning mind. In these respects, as the world was made, so it is.

But it may be objected that, as the scale of conscious being rises, its capacity to suffer increases. This we admit, but the whole case is not stated. A capacity for extreme suffering implies a capacity for extreme joy. A great good, when perverted, may become a great evil. It may be charged that the Creator has provided for the degradation attendant on the beastly drunkenness which we so much deplore. A poor artist even can depict the sorrows which wives and children very often endure because of strong drink; and the conclusion is that wheat and rye and corn and barley might have been so created that such results would have been impossible. This complaint is as absurd as it would be to find fault with God because long was not also short, or that a circle was not also a square.

§ 5. BROAD VIEWS OF THE UNIVERSE DISSIPATE TRIVIAL OBJECTIONS.

But let us grant that in the vital world there is much which to a human understanding is inscrutable. What of it? Exactly what we might expect in a universe so vast and complex as this. Where so much is known that is absolutely faultless, is it not reasonable to conclude that, to a mind which could grasp the whole, and understand the relation of this whole to its parts, perfection would characterize the universe? The minds of such men as Newton and Kant were overwhelmed, not only with the vastness of crea-

tion, but with the depth of its significance; and, as much as ever in the past, the great intellects of the present day stand in awe at the profundity of meaning which, in glimpses, the universe reveals. The little we learn carries us, let the direction we take be what it may, upon the borders of the infinite and unknown. In reading the rhetorical invectives of Colonel Ingersoll, nothing impresses us so deeply and painfully as the narrowness and incoherence of his conceptions of the universe he pretends to interpret. M. Pasteur is probably the first scientific mind of France, and it may be well to contrast the spirit in which he writes with the gushing diatribes of the American infidel. In speaking of the philosophy of Comte, he says:

“The great and manifest fault of this system is that it omits from the positive conception of the world the most important of positive ideas—that of the Infinite. Beyond the starry firmament what is there? More stars and skies. And beyond these? The human mind, impelled by an irresistible power, will *never* cease to ask itself, What lies beyond all? It is in vain to speak of space, of time, of size unlimited. These words surpass the human understanding. But he who proclaims the existence of the Infinite (and no man can escape from it), comprehends in that assertion more of the supernatural than there is in all the miracles of all religions; for the conception of the Infinite has the twofold character-

istics that it is inevitable and incomprehensible. We prostrate ourselves before the thought which masters all the faculties of the understanding. The conception of the Infinite is everywhere irresistibly manifest. It places the supernatural in every human heart."

An able writer in the *Edinburgh Review* says: "He studies nature with a careless eye and a benighted mind who does not perceive that the supernatural is in it and above it. For, when all is said that science can teach, and all is done that skill can achieve, to cultivate the earth and bring forth its fruits, one gift remains, without which everything else were vain—that gift without which the earth would be no more than the cinders of a planet—the mystery and miracle of life. Life is everywhere. Without life nothing would exist at all; with the diffusion of life creation begins; and of that act all but a supernatural power is incapable."

M. Dumas stands upon the borders of a great truth when he says: "The source of life and its essence are unknown to us. We have not the mysterious link which connects the body and mind, and constitutes the unity of the individual man."

If we regard the mind, the intelligence, as the man, and the life as the intermediary and connecting link between mind and body, the case is simple and plain enough.

The above great, but humble, disciples of

nature, sitting at her feet to receive instruction, present a strange contrast to the noisy and self-confident Colonel Ingersoll. He appears as a petulant and indulged child who had, with a careless stroke of the hammer, hit his finger instead of the nail, and, as a consequence, was raving mad, and ready to tear down his father's workshop, declaring that it must have been built by an "infinite fiend;" or as the little girl who, from the garden window watched her flower-bed through a beating storm, then running to her mother, petulantly said: "Mamma, see! is Dod dood to hurt my flowers and your darden so?"

But the worst of this aspect of nature is yet to be considered. With the profound remarks above quoted before us, we shall not be surprised if nature, at some points, is deeper than the mind can penetrate. But let us face the facts fully and fairly.

§6. VIRTUE MAY BE THE OCCASION OR CAUSE OF SUFFERING.

The old theology made a mistake in affirming that there could not be any suffering except as a punishment for sin. The Book of Job—the grandest poem in existence—was written to prove the contrary. The figment that brutes and infants are punished because of the sin of Adam should never be mentioned again. There are evils which are not moral, and sufferings which are not judicial. These are facts which must be admitted

without regard to consequences, for they are true. The question, then, is: Can we look upon a vast amount of innocent suffering, and at the same moment recognize the existence of God? Many related propositions at once lift up their heads and demand to be heard on this subject; and such is the complicated nature of the case that a wide range of thought is demanded. Evil, suffering, and punishment may, in some cases, refer to the same sin, but frequently they relate to *things* which have no moral quality.

How often has history shown that *virtue itself* has been the *cause* or *occasion* of an untold amount of suffering in this world! Think of the millions who have suffered death because of their unflinching loyalty to the true and the right. Purity of life has sent untold thousands to the stake, to prison, and to jail. Christ said, "Blessed are the merciful"—the *misericordia*—the aching heart—why? Because the *heart's agony*, in many cases, is the inevitable *outcome* of the best and purest qualities of human nature. We have seen the husband, the wife, the father and mother, wring their hands in the deepest distress because they could render no help to a suffering, dying loved one. In such a case the *want of pain* would have indicated a *lack of virtue*. Under the inspiration of the pain one suffers, is he not moved, as nothing else can move him, to alleviate the sufferings of others? Is not the ever-welcome suffering of virtue a relief, on the whole, to the world's suffer-

ing? Was not this—the suffering of virtue—the basal principle of the suffering of Christ?

§ 7. THE MIND IS DISCIPLINED AND DEVELOPED
BY TOIL AND SUFFERING.

Were this life all, man would be an enigma which no philosophy could solve; but if we keep him before us as beginning an existence here, in a developing and disciplining state, as preparatory to a hereafter, the most troublesome problems arising from his situation will dissolve in a moment. We read of fallen angels, and our impression is that man offered but slight resistance and easily lapsed into sin. Have the angels, which kept their first estate, ever been subject to tests and trials, and have they thus strengthened and confirmed themselves in virtue? Unless they have been favored with such an experience, we do not see how their assurance of their position can be doubly sure. It was a profound remark made by an old divine that maturity and strength in the religious life required prayer, faith, and temptation, and only a babe in Christ would wish to be carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease. The fact is, it is easy to see, when we come down to practical business and put all sentimentalism and poetic fancies aside, that this world, with its difficulties, dangers, duties, allurements to the byways of vice, and temptations to wrong-doing in a thousand instances, is, after all, exactly the world best adapted to our interests. The paths of right and

wrong are constantly before us, rendering it necessary for us, in the action of the will, to determine which shall be taken; and without this element of strength, character will ever remain a weak and flabby affair. Young people are often exhorted to avoid the snares and temptations of life; but as perfect success in this respect is impossible, would it not be better to instruct them to be on their guard, ever ready for the foe they *must* meet, and never think of any result except a fight and a victory for the right? Is it possible for virtue to experience a vigorous growth and acquire a mature and manly strength, except by exercise in the arena of conflict? Was man ever known to be pre-eminent in virtue who had not in some way, or in various ways, passed through the furnace of temptation? "The trial of your faith," says an apostle, "is more precious than gold."

§ 8. APPARENT EVILS MAY BE REAL BLESSINGS.

We must here sharply distinguish between an evil and a sin. In the affairs of nature there may be evils—foils to something else—which are not sins. The bad medicine contemplates restored health; the laborious, wearisome study, mental development and strength; the amputated limb, the saving of life; the fasting of to-day, an improved appetite and a more vigorous digestion to-morrow; and out of every conceivable evil of this order some good may be derived. Has not God allowed, and even ordained, that evils and suffer-

ings shall make up a large part of the affairs of this world, as *a means* of developing and maturing a stalwart virtue in man? As means to an end, what better arrangement could have been devised? Can either men or angels be safe without such an experience? Could man be so situated that, without an effort, every wish of his heart would be promptly granted, every passion gratified, and every object of his ambition accomplished, and all these things were legitimate and proper in themselves, they might tend, in some small degree, to fix the habit of virtue; but as a first or continuous step to building a virtuous character, they would be of little or no value. It is by rowing against the current and riding upon the breakers that hardness of muscle and endurance of strength are secured.

In speaking of the troubles of this life, as a state of probation, the always profound Bishop Butler says:

“Virtuous self-government is not only always right in itself, but also improves the *inward constitution of character*, and may improve it to such a degree that, though we should suppose it impossible for particular affections to be absolutely coincident with the moral principle, and consequently should allow that such creatures as have been above supposed would forever remain defectible, yet their danger of actually deviating from right may be almost infinitely lessened and they fully fortified against what remains of it, if

that may be called danger against which there is an adequate effectual security."

If we would stop abusing, and properly interpret, this world, we might find, in its apparent evils and real sufferings, sources and means for our greatest advancement in virtue and our best security against vice.

CHAPTER XII.

LAW COMMENSURATE WITH THE VASTNESS OF THE
UNIVERSE.

THE heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork.—BIBLE.

§ I. THE RELATION OF THE CREATOR TO THE CRE-
ATED SURPASSES HUMAN COMPREHENSION.

In holding to God as a divine Personality, and denying that he is any part of the universe he created, either its substance or laws, we do not by any means isolate him from it and abandon it to its fate. If asked minutely to define the relation the Creator sustains to the things created, we can only answer, He is Governor. If asked, *How* can he be said to govern that which is, in some way, subject to laws of its own—laws which are inherent in its own nature?—we answer, “By searching we can not find out the Almighty to perfection;” for “his wisdom is unsearchable, and his ways are past finding out.” The Intelligence who has a clear and perfect conception of God as the Creator on the one hand, and of the universe he created on the other, might be able, with an eternity of time before him, to formulate the relation they sustain to each other. The *man* who undertakes such a task, gives the fullest proof

that he has but a very limited conception of either God or nature. We hold, at the same moment, to the existence of God *as* Governor, and to the reign of the laws he has established; and if critics shall stagger at the mysteries involved, we confess we can not help them. We will, however, engage to attack the proposition, and do for it the best we can, if any one will explain to us the relation oxygen and hydrogen sustain to each other so as to form a molecule of water. In the main, we must be content with facts. The *why* and *how* of things are a great way off.

§ 2. IN THE REIGN OF LAW WE SEE TRANSCENDENTAL INTELLIGENCE, DESIGN, AND POWER, AND THESE UNERRINGLY SUGGEST A DIVINE PERSONALITY.

We have seen this illustrated in things small, and now let us take a wider sweep through the boundless domain of the Almighty, and see if we can detect there the same foot-prints of the world's Governor. Suppose we regard every star as a sun, surrounded by its retinue of planets and satellites, even then, in number, the worlds that come within the range of our great telescopes, compared to the whole universe, will be but "as a leaf of the forest when the summer is green;" yet, if a God exist, we may expect that as perfect order will everywhere prevail as in the formation of a drop of water or grain of sand. The Being who can establish a law which will always and

everywhere unerringly count the atoms of hydrogen which constitute the differences between the sugars of cane, grape, and maple, can also weigh all the worlds that exist in his balances, and establish laws which will govern them with precision.

Kepler was the first clearly to grasp the idea that the uniformity which prevailed everywhere, in the heavens above and the earth beneath, could be secured only by the action of a Supreme Lawgiver; and also that man ought to be able to read these laws as written on the face of the things governed. After eighteen years of severe study and close observation, "hunting down," as he said, theory after theory, he was able to proclaim the following as clearly established facts:

1. Planets revolve in ellipses with the sun at one focus.

2. A line connecting the center of the earth with the center of the sun passes over equal spaces in equal times.

3. The squares of the times of the revolution of the planets about the sun are proportional to the cubes of their mean distance from the sun.

Kepler, by observation, discovered *facts* of the widest significance; but it was reserved for Newton to discover the simple but universal *law* of gravitation, by which the relations and movements of all the planets were governed. This law includes in its grasp the smallest atom as well as all the orbs in space; it matters not

what their size or distance from each other may be.

Let us, for a moment, glance at the exactness and utility of the reign of law. The earth, for unknown ages, has been spinning its way around the sun, at a distance, according to the most trustworthy calculations, of about ninety-three millions of miles. We learn from Egyptian records that, three thousand years ago, so many days, hours, and seconds were required for the earth to complete this journey; and their figures, compared with ours of to-day, present a difference of only the fifteenth part of a second, showing, if no mistake has been made either by the ancient Egyptian astronomers or by ourselves, that the centripetal force has gained upon the centrifugal a hair's breadth or so, lessening to that extent the earth's distance from the sun. How wonderful is this reign of law! And the change indicated is quite likely to be an error of observation. If, in these facts, the universe does not declare the glory of God, its Governor, it is because we have not ears to hear.

Neptune moves around the sun at the enormous distance of nearly three billions of miles, requiring for the journey one hundred and sixty-four years; and yet there is no reason why we should doubt that this planet performs its journey in the appointed time to the fraction of a second. Uranus, Saturn with his rings and moons, Jupiter with his train, and all the other children of the

sun, are equally obedient to his high commands. Carry out this idea of law and order to all the stars that shine, and to all the bodies that move through space, and ask the question, By whom was this system established? Whether a living God exist or not, the palpable facts of nature irresistibly force upon us such conceptions of a Power as embrace all the attributes and properties in the abstract which we can conceive a God to possess; yet all that the words infinite or divine can imply may be clearly seen in all the work that is done between the littleness of weighing or counting the atoms of hydrogen to form a molecule of sugar and arranging the galaxies of the skies.

§ 3. LAW PERTAINS AS RIGIDLY TO THE FORMATION OF CHARACTER AS TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE HEAVENS.

We can not too clearly fix in mind the fact that in a system of law, whether physical or moral, we encounter principles which are necessary, inflexible, and eternal. The bearing and importance of this element of government we shall more clearly see when we come to consider it in connection with the moral government of God. The question will then take this form: If, as a matter of law, heaven is the necessary outcome of purity of character, what will follow where such character is wanting? In its proper place this topic will be carefully considered. It

will appear that, in proportion as nature's laws, when known and obeyed, produce the best results, when disobeyed they are terribly destructive. The one alternative implies the other, as the positive pole of the magnet is always attended by the negative pole. In the suffering that follows the violation of nature's laws we have the most positive proof that the world has a moral Governor.

Should the Creator take from man his capacity to abuse nature by the transgression of its laws, to an equal extent his ability wisely to use it would also be reduced. In both these respects millions of our race have already been great sufferers. The Troglodytes, or cave-dwellers, like the Fuegians, were probably once a fairly well-civilized race of beings, whom the fortunes of relentless war reduced almost to the condition of brutes. When the crimes of avarice, ambition, and trade and commerce, were rendered impossible to them, they also had to be content with a cave for their home, a dug-out for their means of transportation, and with such nuts and berries as they could gather for their harvests. The magnet may represent man, virtue, society, and government; you can not possess one pole without the possibilities of the other.

Because of their mixture and mutually modifying influence, it is seldom that we see virtue in all its beauty, or vice in all its deformity. We flatter ourselves that virtue and happiness are

gaining, though slowly, the ascendancy in the world. Man is rapidly conquering nature, and appropriating its wealth to his comfort. Formerly nations and tribes made war on each other, and inbrued their hands in each other's blood; now, as a means of support, man looks to the earth and the oceans and seas as the sources of honest and inexhaustible wealth. The gold and silver, iron, coal, oil, and gas are made to relieve him from much of his toil and sweat, and bring to each locality the productions of every latitude and clime. Were man wise and moral enough to use, without excess, all the good things of nature, he would see, more clearly than he does now, that this world is characterized by the most boundless beneficence. Chalmers says :

“Just imagine, for a moment, that honor and integrity and benevolence were perfect and universal in the world; that each held the property and right and reputation of his neighbor to be as dear to him as his own; that the suspicion and the jealousies and the heart burnings, whether of hostile violence or of envious competition, were altogether banished from human society; that the emotions, at all times delightful, of good-will on the one side were ever and anon calling the emotions, no less delightful, of gratitude back again; that truth and tenderness hold their secure abode in every family; and, on stepping forth on the wider companionship of life, that each could confidently rejoice in every one he met with as a

brother and a friend,—we ask if, on this simple change—a change, you will observe, in the *morale* of humanity—though winter should repeat its storms as heretofore, and every element of nature were to abide unchanged, yet, in virtue of a process and a revolution altogether mental, would not our millennium have begun, and a heaven on earth be realized?”

§ 4. APPARENT IRREGULARITIES IMPLY NO SUSPENSION OF LAW.

May we not, then, affirm that, notwithstanding winter storms and summer heats, and all other difficulties with which mortals are required to contend, that the creation of the universe was suggested by infinite wisdom and goodness? Can we not perceive, as we look down deep into the constitution of nature, that temporary evils are but the transient results of the operation of laws which are essential to the well-being of humanity as a whole? Let us glance at the genesis of a cyclone. The heat of the sun sets the air in motion; hills, mountains, valleys, and forests break it up into currents and waves; at the same time evaporation from oceans, seas, lakes, and rivers goes on; a marvelous force known as electricity—one of the most necessary forces of nature—is developed, and, in preserving its own equilibrium, it tends to preserve the equilibrium and quietness of nature; but, in spite of this force, currents of the atmosphere collide and become gorged, waves

of vapor concentrate, and cloud becomes packed on cloud; and the cyclone, the deluging rain, and the play of lightning which follow, are simply nature's method of finding repose in a restored equilibrium. What the earth suffers in this instance from the effects of the sun's heat is not to be mentioned in comparison with the blessings received at the same time from the operation of the laws which brought it about.

§ 5. LAW IS AN INCORPORATION OF INFINITE INTELLIGENCE AND DESIGN.

The Atheist might as well rail against one aspect of nature as another; for all alike result from the operation of common constitutional laws, and these laws are an expression of infinite wisdom. Day and night, the changing seasons, the spring gushing from its fountain, the brook flowing over its pebbles, the song of the birds, the fragrance of the flowers, and whatever there is of nature that cheers the heart or pleases the fancy of man, bears alike the stamp of the same infinite mind. Even should the earth quake, and volcanoes spout their cataracts of lava, of this will we be confident, that underneath every apparent commotion there are in operation laws which are essential to the habitableness of the earth.

Among the marvels connected with the operation of the laws of nature, we may mention the evidences of contrivance and plan which we meet with at every turn. The matter or dirt which

enters into the structure of the rose and lily is exactly what it was when afloat in the air or forming a part of the ground, and no one can suppose that it was the seat of consciousness or thought. Yet there is an intelligence somewhere which unerringly directs this matter in one case so as to form a rose, and in the other case a lily. This consciousness and intelligence can not be in the dirt nor in the life of the respective flowers; at least we are not able to detect a trace of it there. Where, then, is it? It must be somewhere, for we see it *worked out* in the structure of the flower. The intelligence here manifested is of the highest order. Man can no more construct a lily than he can a solar system. It appears that the rose is a vital product, and that its life, acting out the laws of *its* being, so controls the forces and laws of matter as to fashion common dirt into this beautiful structure. One of the most complicated, beautiful, and exquisite organisms known to nature is the *Foraminifera*, and yet this shell is inhabited by nothing more in appearance than a little bleb of jelly. But there is the delicate and exquisitely constructed shell—the genius of man can not duplicate it. How came it to be? Could that jelly contrive and execute anything so wonderful? The *facts* in the case must proclaim *its truth*, or nature lies. What, then, are they? In that jelly there is life, and that life *must be* the embodiment of laws, or of fixed wisdom, which work out these results. The author of the intel-

ligence and design which the laws express must be God. It is marvelous to think of the Author of all the *substances* of this vast universe; but far more so to think of the wisdom and power and goodness he deposited in the laws which he established for the structure of things and their government. Overlooking this fact vitiates the positive philosophy, for its most essential factor is wanting.

No one believes that the human heart is the seat of consciousness or thought more than the stomach, the liver, or the kidneys, or even a flower or a stone; yet in every throb it acts out a series of purposes or intentions. Physiologists have much to say of the structure and functions of organs; but the meaning would be the same if they should substitute the word office or purpose for function. *Why* do the walls of the heart contract? For the purpose of expelling the blood. *Why* does the tricuspid valve close when the heart contracts? To prevent the return of the blood which is sent from the right ventricle to the lungs. What is the function or *purpose* of the mitral valve? It prevents the blood from returning into the left auricle, whence it came. For what *purpose* is the blood forced into the lungs? That it may be brought into contact with the air. The plant popularly known as "Venus's fly-trap"—*Dionea muscipula*—exhibits, only on a much lower plane, the same evidence of structure and purpose. In the structure of the eye there are thirteen dif-

ferent parts, and in separation no one of them is any more adapted to the purposes of vision than the wheels, screws, pins, and levers of a watch are, in separation, to marking time. But each part of the visual machinery—optic nerve, retina, iris, cornea, glands, lens, etc.—has a specific work of its own to do, function to perform, or purpose to fulfill; and as the result of the correlation and co-operation of the thirteen structures, we have the one eye—a visual organ. The ear is another and wholly different combination of separate structures, for the accomplishment of a very different purpose. Six different and curiously wrought structures—the helix, anti-helix, scapha, tragus, concha, and lobe—correlated to each other and properly put together, each answering the purpose of its creation, make hearing a possibility to the *mind*.

§ 6. MAN, AS AN INTELLIGENCE, IS MADE TO APPRECIATE INTELLIGENCE IN NATURE.

From our own mental operations and consciousness we know that we plan, contrive, adapt, design, and purpose, and hence are familiar with these elements of intellectual phenomena wherever we see them, whether in a chipped flint or anything else. A watch-maker understands the *mental* history of the maker of that instrument as well as he knows its machinery. In the design of the stone and bone instruments of the prehistoric age we read the story of an empire that has wholly vanished. There is nothing which speaks

more clearly and intelligently to intelligence than purpose or intention. In their exquisite as well as great works, the purpose of the bee and the beaver are equally manifest. Different plans and different structures imply thought discrimination, choice, adaptation of means to ends, and design. In the case of the heart, the eye, the ear, the cell of the bee, and the dam of the beaver, where shall we find this intelligence? We answer: In the unconscious laws of their being. How came such an infinitude of knowledge to be in unthinking, unconscious law? God placed it there, as in the highest and grandest part of creation. *Nature's law is God incorporate.* This reading of nature touches every atom of fire-mist that ever whirled its way through space, as well as every sun that shines. Every spire of grass, every flower that blooms, every worm that crawls, and every wing that cleaves the air of heaven, incarnates, in the laws of its being, the wisdom and power of God.

With this conception of nature before us, may we not humbly inquire, Who or what is Robert G. Ingersoll, that he should spit upon it, as he does, and if it must have a Creator, ascribe its existence to an "infinite fiend?" Are we to seek for the cause of his vituperation in the heights or in the depths he has found? Could we persuade him to look up into the face of nature, and look long and steadily, till his mind firmly grasped a measure of its infinite richness and fullness, we think he might wish to hide his head in shame, and dry up

the Niagara of his rhetoric. It is not wise to pick a flaw here and a flaw there, to select an item of this and another of that, and from these partial facts—isolated detachments—form an opinion of the whole; rather, each item of nature should be interpreted in the light of the whole.

Colonel Ingersoll reminds us of the school-boy who made a mistake in figures, and then petulantly demanded that the science of mathematics be adjusted to his blunder; for it is clear to us that *he is*, in some particulars, a mistake; hence his struggle to remodel heaven and earth, and especially to abolish hell, to suit his convenience. By limiting human thoughts and aspirations to this life, and by demanding that moral conduct be judged solely by its immediate consequences, he renders it impossible for us to attach to man anything like immortal dignity. Of course, from such conception of him, God is excluded, and immortality is but a dream. Cudworth quotes Plotinus as follows:

“Whoever, therefore, from the parts thereof, will blame the whole, is an unjust and absurd censurer. For we ought to consider the parts, not alone by themselves, but in reference to the whole, whether they be harmonious and agreeable to the same; otherwise we shall not blame the universe, but some of its parts by themselves. God made the *whole* most beautiful, complete, entire, and sufficient—all-agreeing with itself and its parts.”

CHAPTER XIII.

INFIDELITY GENERATED BY A PERVERSE SPIRIT.

O THOU eternal One! whose presence bright
 All space doth occupy, all motion guide;
 Unchanged through time's all-devastating flight—
 Thou only God! there is no God beside!
 Being above all beings! Mighty One!
 Whom none can comprehend and none explore;
 Who fill'st existence with *thyself* alone—
 Embracing all, supporting, ruling o'er—
 Being whom we call God, and know no more!

—DERZHAVIN.

§ I. THE ONE ADVANTAGE THE SKEPTIC POSSESSES
 IN THIS DISCUSSION.

The infidel champion of this age has one advantage over all his opponents which he is quite sure to retain. In the defense of religion a wise Providence has furnished no weapons which can be used against scoffing and blasphemy; but in this respect we make no complaint against him as a disputant; for from the first, as an embittered Atheist, feeling that his infidelity had cost him dear, he entered the field without reverence for God or respect for the feelings of man. In the use of his rhetoric, he is capable of giving to ridicule and contempt a pungency never surpassed, not even by the extreme vulgarity of Tom Paine. Hume, Volney, Huxley, and Spencer

could use against Christianity all the arguments that were ever written, and the most reverent and fastidious Christian living would not raise an objection to an expression used, because argument alone would be the aim of the writer. A lion can meet a lion on equal terms, for both animals are armed with the same weapons and practice the same method of warfare; but there is an insignificant animal which is so peculiarly armed that it can creep out of its hiding-place and boldly defy all the beasts of the forest. In avoiding a conflict on the unequal terms presented, they display, not cowardice, but prudence and a wise discretion. Whilst therefore we attempt no reply to the vituperation and slang indulged in by Colonel Ingersoll, we shall not allow the repulsiveness of his language to deter us from the defense of the truth.

The issue is fairly joined in the interpretation which must be given to the ever-open volume of nature, and there we meet on tangible ground and on equal terms. If the facts presented signify malignity, chance, and confusion, then there is for us no standing whatever. He has the fullest opportunity to point out defects in the constitution of nature, and suggest the changes he would have made; but it will be our duty to stand for the defense of nature as it is. Let, therefore, the reader understand, once for all, that if the derision of things sacred is to be taken for argument because dressed in pompous rhetoric, we yield that part of the field without striking a

blow. The conviction received from his writings is, that he is the embittered enemy of all forms of religious obligation, and that the indulgence of spite is of far more consequence to him than the use of argument.

In view of what we have said, the reader is entitled to a few samples of his style of thought and form of expression, and to accommodate him we quote the following from his reply to Dr. Field, the man who had treated him with courtesy to excess:

“Your God becomes, or rather is, an infinite Torquemada, who denies to his countless victims even the mercy of death.” “It is your business to defend the God of the Presbyterian faith.” “Man must believe in your God.” “Your God sends his pestilence on the just and the unjust.” “His earthquake devours, and his cyclones rend and wreck, the loving and the vicious, the honest and the criminal.” “Do not these things prove that your God is cruel to all alike? In other words, do they not demonstrate the absolute impartiality of the divine negligence?” “Do you not believe that any honest man of average intelligence, having absolute control of the rain, could do vastly better than is being done? Certainly there would be no droughts nor floods. The crops would not be permitted to wither and die while rain was being wasted in the sea.” “Is it conceivable that a good man, with power to control the winds, would not prevent cyclones?”

"Would you not rather trust a wise and honest man with the lightnings?" "Why should your God allow his worshipers, his adorers, to be destroyed by his enemies?" "The only thing you are really certain of in relation to your God is, that he is not what you think he is." "When I say your God, of course I mean the God described in the Bible and the Presbyterian Confession of Faith." "But again I say that, in the nature of things, there can be no evidence of the existence of an Infinite Being." "Think for a moment of your God, the keeper of an infinite penitentiary filled with immortal criminals—your God, an eternal turnkey, without the pardoning power." "It is better to serve your neighbor than to serve God, even if God exist." "When has any God listened to the prayer of any man?" "It does not seem within the prospect of belief that Jehovah, the cruel, the jealous, the ignorant, and the revengeful, is the creator and the preserver of the universe." "If that doctrine is true, is not your God an infinite criminal?" "What do you think of Jehovah?" etc.

The above quotations, exhibiting the spirit Ingersoll brings to the discussion of God, nature, and religion, will convince the reader of his diatribes that he must constantly discriminate between the frothy fury of his invectives and argument. He is aware that, on account of his blasphemies, he is avoided by the better part of community, and that for this ostracism he tries to

find some compensation in the applause of the baser sort of the profligate rabble. On account of his matchless eloquence he would be a great favorite with politicians were it not for his obnoxious character; but these astute men, appreciating the Christian sentiment of the Nation, find it necessary to relegate him to useless obscurity, as his advocacy would damage any cause which embraced questions of decency, morality, or religion. Under this ban and exclusion there is a sting which pierces the core of his being; and, as an outlet to his wounded and angry feelings, he assails God and nature, religion and Christian people. This part of the field we surrender to him.

§ 2. THE INFIDEL'S LOW CONCEPTION OF HUMANITY
PLACES MAN BELOW THE PLANE OF RELIGION.

It is easy to detect the origin and trace the genesis of current infidelity. As a basic principle it is assumed that man begins and completes his destiny with this life and with the affairs of this world. Men are related to each other, to the ground, to the air, to the changing seasons, to business and trade, and all their interests are thus limited. So low down in the scale of being is man placed, that even if there were a God, as Creator and Father, it would be none of his business. As a part of the animal creation, beyond the affairs of this life he has no concern.

With such conceptions of man and the world

accepted as true, and placed at the base of an argument, what but Atheistic conclusions could be reached? We have here nothing but a man of straw fitted up for the occasion. Sober argument required that a Scripture representation be made of God, of man, of the world, and of their relation to eternity. The reasonableness and consistency of this conception of the universe might then have been properly considered. Objections which embraced fully the facts in the case would have carried weight and received attention. But to start an investigation of an immense subject by the consideration of a fragment of it, then caricature that fragment and make it the basis for the judgment of the whole, is not reasoning, but ranting.

The Scripture doctrine is, that earth is not to be regarded as the real and proper home of man; that there is for him a better country; and that, at best, he can realize but the beginning of a troubled existence in this world. If earthquakes and cyclones annoy, they also remind him that he is away from home, a stranger in a strange land. The imperfection and misery of man's condition in this world find an ample explanation in the facts that as there exists a God of infinite purity, the moral wrong of this world must be the source of wretchedness more or less to all connected with it. Were it a palpable fact that wickedness and blessedness moved through this world hand in hand, the Atheist would find in it a more cogent argument for his cause than any he now

possesses. The tears and sorrows of earth testify at the same time, and with the same force, to the inherent bitterness of sin, and that the world has a moral Governor. When, from a Christian standpoint, we are favored with a conception of the universe as a whole, Atheistic criticisms upon fragments here and there present a truly beggarly appearance.

§ 3. A TRUE AND ELEVATED CONCEPTION OF MAN
ESSENTIAL TO A CORRECT UNDERSTANDING OF
RELIGION.

The matter of the human body is not the man,—that is nothing but matter; and it is in the body exactly what it was *per se* before it came to be a part of the body. The life of the body—a part of the vital world—built the body, animates it, and conserves it; but that is not the man. The man is the mind, a high spirit, intelligence. As man is a substantive individual, he must have, or rather be, an indivisible and indestructible entity somewhere. What can that entity, that conscious self be, but the mind? The life of the body seems as the intermediary between mind and body, and makes control of the body possible. Unextended mind can not come into contact with extended matter. The relation of mind to life is very intimate, but wholly inexplicable. We must not, then, simply conceive of man as an organism, but as an intelligence, allied in nature more closely to worlds above than to worlds below him. His

body's kinship with the dust does not involve the *man*. We make these statements, not on the authority of revelation, but of physics, psychology, observation, and consciousness.

Regarding the hand, and, in fact, the whole body, with its animating life, *in their relation to the mind*, as a part of the external world, let us isolate the mind—take it one side—and interrogate it in regard to those matters which relate to God, religion, and eternity. To a long series of questions we have in mind, this high Intelligence responds as follows: "I am conscious of responsibility for my purposes and intentions, whether carried into effect or not, and whether known or not; and I do not see how this can be unless there is an All-seeing Judge somewhere, to whom I must give an account. I am conscious of weakness and dependence, and it is natural to think that the strong One knows it. I am aware that my knowledge is limited, but what I have carries me upon the borders of the Infinite. I need mercy, I need forgiveness, and who but the All-seeing One can forgive the secret sins of my heart? Right action brings me peace, and I feel that I have the approbation of all that is good in the universe. If I do wrong I am condemned, though man may be ignorant of it." Unless there be a God, I am an enigma. These items of human experience, these workings of the heart, are as much facts of nature as the ebb and flow of the tides. They must mean something; what is it?

§ 4. THE CONSCIENCE IS AN ORACLE IN THE MORAL WORLD.

Conscience is a moral feeling or emotion, and we must not confound it with judgment nor with any intellectual faculty. Intellect is responsible for the decisions rendered on all questions of right and wrong, and conscience approvingly follows an act which reason has decided is right, and disapprovingly follows an act which judgment has decided is wrong. There often is an erroneous judgment, but there can be no such thing as a corrupt conscience. Conscience, unless seared as with a hot iron and silenced, invariably and infallibly approves the right *as decided* by the judgment, and disapproves the wrong as decided by the judgment.

Conscience, then, as a part of creation, must be regarded as an element of nature. It is one of the roots of the moral world. It is the ear in man, which listens when God says: "Thou shalt!" Human nature is never presented to us in a more self-revealing and frightful aspect than when the guilty have been summoned to the judgment-bar of their own conscience. The poets, as our best interpreters of the heart, should be heard on this subject:

"Suspicion always haunts the guilty mind;
The thief does fear every bush an officer."

(Shakespeare.)

"Guiltiness would speak though every tongue were out of use."

(Ibid)

“Remorse drops anguish from her burning eyes,
Feels hell’s eternal worm, and shuddering dies.”
(Sprague.)

“He who once sins, like him who slides on ice,
Goes swiftly down the slippery ways of vice;
Though conscience check him, yet these rubs gone o’er,
He glides on smoothly, and looks back no more.”
(Juvenal.)

“So do the dark in soul expire,
Or live like scorpions girt with fire;
So writhes the mind remorse hath riven—
Unfit for earth, undoomed for heaven;
Darkness above, despair beneath;
Around it flame, within it death.” (Byron.)

“When cruel deeds are done, in vain relents
The doer’s heart, and mournfully repents.
So when a fire has raged, the smokes that rise,
In useless lamentation drape the skies.”
(Oriental.)

If the greatest of herbs comes from the smallest of seeds, and if the mighty oak of the forest is but an evolution of the potency lodged in the acorn, may we not infer that the realm of which conscience forms a part, will touch the whole life of every intelligent being? Do we not find incorporated in ourselves the root-element of a moral government? Anguish and remorse of soul, because of secret sins, indicate a personal inward disturbance of character; and the idea of responsibility and accountability can be interpreted only on the hypothesis that there is an All-seeing One, now dealing with us, who has the authority to judge and to punish. To see this subject in all its length and breadth, we must take it into the

light of the moral world, and an intelligence which grasps the great truth that the character we form here fixes our destiny forever. Atheism makes its most important point against religion by degrading man and placing him beneath the reach of truth.

§ 5. SACRIFICE IS AN ELEMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION OF NATURE.

The skeptic inquires: "Does it seem possible that infinite goodness would create a world in which life feeds on life—in which everything devours and is devoured? Can there be a sadder fact than this? Innocence is not a certain shield."

All this is maudlin sentimentalism, and amounts to nothing. In this world of sin and struggle, virtue is called upon to act a noble part. The post of danger is the post of honor. If *virtue* is to excuse us from activity, and shield us from sacrifice and suffering, the less we have of it the better. Duty and affection, as elements of virtue, may plunge us in the floods, or send us through the flames, to rescue wife or child or friend, and there can be no higher virtue than the unselfish sacrifice of life for the good of others.

So far as we know, there is nothing that exists for itself. Each atom is correlated to other atoms, and without such correlation the world would be something like an impalpable ether. As we rise higher and higher in the scale of being, relationships become more complex, more intricate, and of a higher order. In the fact that the lower

orders of animals exist, not only for themselves but for higher orders, we may see the pregnant truth that selfishness and waste are not parts of the constitution of nature. The element of vicariousness is imbedded in the self-sacrificing order of nature; and why should the theological application of the principle—the highest application it can receive—be treated by infidels with such extreme contempt?

§ 6. THE INFINITE CREATOR OCCUPIES A REALM
ALL HIS OWN, AS HE ONLY IS DIVINE.

Ingersoll tries his hand at metaphysics in the following bungling manner: "If nature is infinite, how can there be a power outside of nature? . . . But if you mean that there is something supernatural back of nature, directing events, then I insist that there can, by no possibility, be any evidence of the existence of such a power." That is, there can not be two infinities; and if nature is infinite, then there can be no God.

The root of the difficulty is in confounding the meaning of two words of very different meaning—*infinite* and *divine*. We say of time, space, and number that they are infinite—that is, unlimited—and we make no objection to the theory, or rather to the terminology, that the universe is infinite. But none of these infinities are attributes of God, nor does *their* existence interfere with *his* existence. Neither number nor bulk nor time nor space is an attribute or relation of the Almighty.

He is distinguished from the whole universe of things in that, *in essence, he is divine*. His existence is in a realm exclusively his own. He is not material, not human, not angelic, and the existence of such things and beings is not in the sphere of the divine. Nothing more gross or coarse can be found in heathen mythology than the idea that God, in bulk, fills all space, making the existence of other things impossible.

CHAPTER XIV.

ATHEISM IS INTRENCHED IN THE DOCTRINE OF
NECESSITY.

THE great service a false psychology has rendered to the cause of necessity is easily seen. For having identified an act of the will with a state of sensibility, which is universally conceived to be necessitated, the necessitarian is delivered from more than half his labors. By merging a phenomenon or manifestation of the will in a state of sensibility, it seems to lose its own characteristic, which is incompatible with the scheme of necessity, and to assume the characteristic of feeling, which is perfectly reconcilable with it; nay, which demands the scheme of necessity to account for its existence.

—BLEDSE.

§ I. ATHEISM DENIES THE DOCTRINE OF MAN'S
FREE AGENCY.

We now propose to examine those principles which, more than all others, serve as the foundation of the fashionable Atheism of the present age. Colonel Ingersoll, speaking for his school, in a letter to Dr. Field, says:

“Is there not room for a better, for a higher philosophy? After all, is it not possible that we may find that everything has been *necessarily* produced; that all religions are superstitions, all mistakes and all *crimes* were simply *necessities*? Is it not possible that out of this perception may come not only love and pity for others, but absolute *justification* for the individual? May we not

find that every soul has, like Mazeppa, been lashed to the wild horse of passion, or, like Prometheus, to the rocks of fate?"

As the insuperable difficulty in the way of this conception of God, man, and nature arises from the doctrine of Free Will and the consequent responsibility of man for his conduct, he disposes of this objection as follows in his letter to Gladstone:

"You seem to think that the fact of responsibility is in danger unless it rests upon the will, and this *will* you regard as something without a cause. . . . Is not the will a product? Independent of all conditions, can it exist?" An *ad captandum* question, by the way. "Is it not necessarily produced? Behind every wish and thought, every dream and fancy, every fear and hope, are there not countless causes?"

From the above disjointed and scarcely intelligible questioning, it is evident that Ingersoll confounds will with desire, feeling, and sensibility; and really he has no conception of its true character. One thing, however, is clear: he excludes from the mind everything which can serve as the basis of responsibility. It has at last become clear that infidelity is intrenched in the doctrine of fate as its stronghold, and the history of thought has shown that in all the past, where the laws of logic are regarded, the adoption of the doctrine of necessity *necessarily* leads to Atheism.

§ 2. MATERIALISTIC PHILOSOPHY EMBRACES THE
IDEA OF NECESSITY.

Physical, chemical, and mechanical laws control at every step the science of matter. With matter as quantity the science of mathematics is closely associated, and the materialist ascribes its precisions to every change or combination that can take place in either the universe of matter or mind. Matter is held to be eternal. There is no place for a divine Personality, and in man neither a vital nor a spiritual nature is recognized. The beginning and ending of all government is found in the sway of mechanical law. Man is no more responsible for what he does than water is for freezing or thawing as the temperature of the atmosphere may change. Cudworth reasons God out of this fatalistic universe as follows:

“The supposed Deity and maker of the world was either willing to abolish all evils, but not able; or he was able, but not willing; or else, lastly, he was both able and willing. This latter is the only thing that answers to the notion of God. Now, that the supposed Creator of all things was not thus both able and willing to abolish all evils is plain, because then there would have been no evils at all left. Wherefore, since there is a deluge of evils overflowing all, it must needs be that either he was willing and not able to remove them, and then he was impotent; or

else he was able and not willing, and then he was envious; or, lastly, he was neither able nor willing, and then he was both impotent and envious."

The above statement has been generally accepted by Atheists as satisfactory, and thus we have as a universe a self-made, godless piece of material mechanism. We have now reached and combined the two principles—the existence of evil and the doctrine of necessity—which lie at the foundation of more of the infidelity of the world than all things else which can be found in the form of argument. It is not necessary to suppose that one in a hundred skeptics has the scientific knowledge or the philosophic aptitude necessary to construct a system of materialistic fatalism; for scores and scores of really learned and able men have worked at this problem with great diligence for centuries, and the crowd can avail itself of their labors. There have been necessitarians, a host of them, who were not Atheists. Many of them have been devout and earnest Christians. Augustine incorporated the fatalism of the Stoics with theology; and since his time a large part of the Christian world has accepted this construction of government, and regarded it as one of the "deep things of God" not amenable to reason. Ingersoll recognizes the evils of the world, and accepts the doctrine of necessity, but refuses to acknowledge that a God of infinite perfection can be the creator and governor of such

a world. On any theory he must be a fatalist; but he can get along with the miseries of life far better on the hypothesis of materialistic or purely mechanical law than on the theory of the arbitrary sway of an infinite moral governor. He can look with complacency upon imperfection or friction in a senseless piece of machinery which runs itself, but not on the imperfect government of a Being who is supposed to possess infinite perfections.

Colonel Ingersoll has discreetly abstained from an exposition of the doctrine of necessity, and accepted the conclusions reached by his predecessors. He found this work so well done and ready for his use, that improvement was out of the question. He also found that his mental aptitude and peculiar tastes would not be able to achieve eminent success in any line of abstract thought. It is, however, important that we see where we stand, and the reasons therefor; and to do this, we must drop for the time being the champion infidel of this age and refer to the teachings of his masters.

§ 3. THE FREEDOM OF THE HUMAN WILL.

It is evident that the mind of most modern skeptics is thoroughly saturated with the writings of Diderot, one of the early French infidel philosophers. He was among the first to perceive that the exposition made of the Will by Locke could be pressed into the scheme of fatalism, and he was swift to make the most of it. Though as an

absolute necessitarian he refused to admit that human beings were in the least degree responsible for their conduct, yet he yielded to the arguments which Hobbes and Spinoza had produced in favor of civil governments and the execution of punishment upon evil-doers. He says:

“But if there is no liberty, there is no action that merits either praise or blame; neither vice nor virtue—nothing that ought to be either rewarded or punished. What, then, is the distinction among men? The doing of good and the doing of evil! The doer of evil is one who must be punished. The doer of good is lucky, not virtuous. But though neither the doer of good nor of evil be free, man is, nevertheless, a being to be modified. It is for this reason the doer of evil should be destroyed on the scaffold. From thence the good effects of education, of pleasure, of grief, of grandeur, of poverty, etc.; from thence a philosophy full of pity, strongly attached to the good, nor more angry with the wicked than with the whirlwind which fills one’s eyes with dust.” . . .

The above is, of course, a practical exposition of the doctrine of necessity, without any attempt at proof. That was furnished when the assault was made upon the will, and will be noticed further on.

The following appeal by Diderot, Ingersoll seems to have accepted as if made personally to himself:

“Adopt these principles, if you think them

good, or show me that they are bad. If you adopt them, they will reconcile you with others and with yourself. You will neither be pleased nor angry with yourself for being what you are. Reproach others for nothing, and repent of nothing. This is the first step to wisdom. Besides this, all is prejudice and false philosophy."

§ 4. THE DOCTRINE OF NECESSITY EXPOUNDED.

David Hume, one of the acutest thinkers of any age, is not a favorite author with the people. To read his speculative productions understandingly is no child's play, and but few infidels even spend much time over his pages. His skeptical philosophy has, however, in a diluted form, come down to us through a thousand channels. The speculative philosophies of Bain, Huxley, Tyndall, Mill, and scores besides, are but second or fortieth editions of Hume, with contractions, dilutions, expansions, deteriorations, or modifications of some kind. With these later authors our doughty skeptic is somewhat familiar; but that we may be sure we have the doctrine pure and simple, we will go to Hume directly, who, in its modern form, is, in fact, its fountain-head. On the subject of Liberty and Necessity he says:

"It is universally allowed that matter, in all its operations, is actuated by a necessary force, and that every natural effect is so precisely determined by the energy of its cause that no other

effect, in such particular circumstance, could possibly have resulted from it."

The correctness of the above statement we fully concede, but deny the appositeness of the application which Hume makes of it to human conduct. Let us bear in mind that the law by which anything is governed is not an outward pressure upon it, but arises from within, and is an expression of the nature or essence of the thing governed. If mind, just as matter, comes under the law of cause and effect, then mind *is* matter, or it is an affection of matter. In a remote and general sense, men, society, and nations may be *influenced* by outward material considerations; and doubtless they are, but no fact of that class has any bearing upon the freedom of the will. Hume says:

"The same motives always produce the same actions; the same events follow the same causes—ambition, avarice, self-love, vanity, friendship, generosity, public spirit. These passions, mixed in various degrees, and distributed through society, have been from the beginning of the world, and still are, the sources of all the actions and enterprises which have ever been observed among mankind."

In the above the will is not referred to, or in any way recognized. "Motives" are addressed to the reason to aid it in *its* decisions, and can not touch the will. "Ambition, avarice," etc., are

feelings, and they do not possess an element of will-power. We deny the truthfulness of every statement in the above paragraph. Nor can Huxley, with all his admiration for Hume, ranking him with Kant in ability, follow him here; for he says: "The will counts for something." Hume disposes of the question of *free* will by ignoring the will entirely. On this subject he was the pupil of Edwards, a clergyman, who never had the faintest conception of the will as now understood by all psychologists. But let us see the conclusion of his argument:

"If these circumstances form, in reality, the whole of that necessity which we conceive in matter, and if these circumstances be also invariably acknowledged to take place in the operations of the mind, the dispute is at an end."

But this is exactly what, for reasons given above, we deny. Human liberty is defined as follows:

"By liberty we can only mean a power of acting or not acting according to the determinations of the will—that is, if we choose to remain at rest, we may; if we choose to move, we also may. Now this hypothetical liberty is universally allowed to belong to every one who is not a prisoner or in chains."

No one ever saw more clearly than did Hume that liberty, as he defined it, referred exclusively to the body—to that which may be "chained" and "imprisoned"—and that it amounted to nothing

as a basis of responsibility. The mental man is not made to count for anything in this definition of will. He says again: "In short, if motives are not under our power or direction—which is confessedly the fact—we can, at bottom, have no liberty." In other words, as we are rigidly the victims of motive, we are, "at bottom," the creatures of necessity.

§ 5. THE DOCTRINE OF NECESSITY CAN BE CLEARLY SEEN ONLY IN ITS APPLICATION.

By looking at the practical application which Hume makes of this doctrine, using his own language, we shall be able to trace the fatalism of Ingersoll to its source. He says:

"The only proper object of hatred or vengeance is *a person* or creature [who is] endowed with thought or consciousness; and when any criminal or injurious actions excite that passion, it is only by their relation to the person or connection with him. Actions are, by their very nature, temporary and perishing; and when they proceed, not from some cause in the character and disposition of the person who performed them [but from outside 'motives'], they can neither redound to his honor if good, nor infamy if evil. The actions themselves may be blamable—they may be contrary to all the rules of morality and religion—but the person is not amenable to them; and as they proceed from nothing in him that is durable and constant, and leave nothing of that nature behind

them, it is impossible he can, upon their account, become the object of punishment or vengeance. According to the principle, therefore, which denies necessity—and, consequently, causes—a man is as pure and untainted after having committed the most horrid crime, as at the first moment of his birth. Nor is his character anywise concerned in his actions, since they are not derived from it, and the wickedness of the one can never be used as proof of the depravity of the other." All this, because man is governed by motives, and the will counts for nothing.

Hume conceives character to be a machine, subject to mechanical law; if the machine be good, it will run well and is worth preserving; if bad, it will not run well, and, though not to be blamed, it should be destroyed—"hung," as Diderot says. There is no more recognition of a will, or of will-power, in the mind than in a clock or an engine; nothing of the kind exists to direct one's conduct. Human action can be depended upon only as it springs from necessity. If it were possible for the act to be *one of a number* which might have taken place, then, good or bad, it is without moral quality. This philosophy was first formulated in modern times by Spinoza. These are his words:

"Will you say that God can not be angry with the wicked, or that all men are worthy of beatitude? In regard to the first point, I perfectly agree that God can not be angry with anything which happens according to his decree, but I deny

that it results that all men ought to be happy; for man can be excusable and at the same time be deprived of beatification, and made to suffer in a thousand ways. A horse is excusable for being a horse and not a man, but that prevents not that he ought to be a horse and not a man. He who is rendered mad by the bite of a dog is excusable, and yet we ought to restrain him. In like manner, the man who can not govern his passions, nor restrain them by the fear of the law, though excusable on the account of the infirmity of his nature, can nevertheless not enjoy peace, nor the knowledge and love of God, and it is necessary that he should perish."

When we get around to this Hell Gate, where so many thousands of human crafts have been wrecked, we intend to dynamite it.

The difference between Diderot and Spinoza is the difference between Materialistic and Pantheistic necessity. Without a knowledge of the arguments of either, Colonel Ingersoll agrees with the conclusions of both.

§ 6. THE DOCTRINE OF NECESSITY HAS AS THOROUGHLY CORRUPTED THEOLOGY AS PHILOSOPHY.

The first element of heathen philosophy which Christianity encountered after the apostolic age was the doctrine of necessity. At that time this was the accepted doctrine of all the great schools of Egypt, Greece, and Rome. It constituted an important part of the intellectual furniture which

educated converts brought with them into the Church. As it had for some hundreds of years been regarded as one of the few settled facts of nature and government, no one called its truthfulness in question, or even seemed to think of the bearing it might have upon the scheme of Christianity. Augustine was a Greek, and a great lover of Greek philosophy; and animated by a desire to do a great service to religion and to Christian people, he set about the work of incorporating philosophical necessity with the accepted theology of the Church. In this, the greatest undertaking of his life, he was but too successful.

For some hundreds of years during the Dark Ages—"that night of a thousand years"—this doctrine retired to the cloister, and received but little attention except from chattering monks. With the Reformation, however, it was brought to light, and in the hands of Luther, Melancthon, Zwingli, and especially Calvin, it was given a conspicuous place in the front line of human thought. It became the central idea in all the catechisms and confessions of faith framed at the time, and in a somewhat mummified form it holds that position to-day. As a pulpit theme it was universal, and with a multitude of preachers a favorite doctrine. Children were taught it in the nursery, theological schools were founded and endowed to teach it, and ordination vows were framed to embrace it as a message from heaven to be published to the world. It was made a condition of membership

in the Church and admission to the sacraments. At its behests mothers resigned their children to their fate, even if that were eternal damnation. Nowhere, during all the ages of the past, has the doctrine of necessity so fully intrenched itself as in the theology of the modern Church.

CHAPTER XV.

THEOLOGY HAS BEEN VITIATED BY THE DOCTRINE
OF NECESSITY.

THUS, according to these philosophers, everything is full of God. Not content with the principle that nothing exists but by his will, that nothing possesses any power but by his concession, they rob nature and all created beings of every power, in order to render their dependence on the Deity still more sensible and immediate. They consider not that by this theory they diminish instead of magnifying the grandeur of those attributes which they affect so much to celebrate. It argues surely more power in the Deity to delegate a certain degree of power to inferior creatures, than to produce everything by his own immediate volition. It argues more wisdom at first to contrive the fabric of the world with such perfect foresight, that of itself, by its proper operation, it may serve all the purposes of Providence, than if the great Creator were obliged every moment to adjust its parts, and animate by his breath all the wheels of that stupendous machine.

—HUME.

§ I. THEOLOGY HAS SUFFERED FROM ITS ALLIANCES
WITH PHILOSOPHY.

There are two separate and independent lines of thought which place the universe under the law of necessity. These are materialistic mechanism and Pantheistic idealism.

The argument for necessity, as furnished by the Atheist, was presented in the last chapter; and we propose now to bring into the field as

their unconscious allies, a class of distinguished theologians; for, strange as it may seem, Christian writers, of great eminence and deep piety, have given the whole weight of their learning and logic to support this stronghold of Atheism. The doctrine of fatalism has held a high place in the creeds of Churches, and done much to mold the thought of the religious world. The Atheist looks upon the universe as composed of matter, governed by mechanical law; the Christian fatalist regards God, the infinite, the absolute, the all-embracing One, as the all-controlling power in the universe. God alone is cause; he is the cause of causes—all else is effect.

§ 2. THEOLOGICAL NECESSITY LOGICALLY LEADS TO ATHEISM.

There are many in the world—some of them sons of clergymen—who in early life were taught to think and believe that God was the cause and author of whatever happens. In conviction and feeling they revolted from this idea. They were conscious of existence, and that they did things. When they sinned, they dared not ascribe that act to God; they knew it was their own act. But as years increased, they found that the doctrine of necessity was sustained by Church creeds and by the most ponderous systems of theology that were ever constructed. Finally they went out into the world of philosophy, and there they learned that the accumulated lore of thousands of years, in

the main, taught the same doctrine. Must they stand alone, and reject what the world believes, and has for ages believed, and thus become necessitarians? If necessitarians, on what ground can they stand? Can a God exist, infinite in all attributes, and at the same time be the cause and the author of all the evil that exists, and has ever existed in this world? For one, I confess I do not see how a human mind can answer that question in the affirmative; and I am not surprised that, among the thousands and thousands who have been compelled to answer it, many have given the Atheistic answer. As a matter of compulsion I should do it.

The theologico-philosophers who have pressed this question upon the attention of young men with minds bright but immature, imaginations quick, and feelings tumultuous, and demanded an affirmative answer, have done that which, more than everything else, was suited to drive them into some form of infidelity.

Descartes, the father of modern philosophy, teaches as follows: "Creation is not a single act, but a continuous exertion of divine agency, without which everything would instantly lapse into the nothingness whence it was drawn. . . . Mere philosophy is enough to make us know that there can not enter the least thought into the mind of man but God must will and have willed from all eternity that it should be there. . . . God could not be absolutely perfect if there could

happen anything in this world which did not spring entirely from him." Descartes furnished Spinoza and Malebranche the ideas which lie at the base of the closely related systems of necessity—Pantheism and Idealism—which they gave to the world.

§ 3. THE DOCTRINE OF NECESSITY IS THE SAME, THOUGH IT MAY SPRING FROM DIFFERENT ROOTS.

Among the hundreds of great religious lights of the past two hundred years, who have taught the doctrine of necessity, we may mention the names of Calvin, Locke, Leibnitz, Hartley, Edwards, Edwards the younger, Chalmers, President Day, Dr. Dick, D'Aubigné, and Dr. McCosh. The doctrine as taught by all these authors is practically the same as that taught by modern Atheists, and by the Stoics of twenty centuries ago. As one of the very ablest expounders of this doctrine, we quote from Edwards:

"It is evident that such a providential disposing and determining of men's moral actions, though *it infers a moral necessity of those actions*, yet it does not in the least infringe the real liberty of mankind, the *only liberty* that common sense teaches to be necessary to moral agency, which, as has been demonstrated is not inconsistent with such necessity."

The moral agency claimed for man is founded on his "liberty to do as he wills or pleases." This is the definition of liberty given by Hobbes,

Hartley, and Hume, adopted from Edwards, and is regarded as orthodox by all schools of fatalists, whether Atheistic, theological, idealistic, or Pantheistic. Hume expresses all there is in it when he says it signifies that "if a man is not imprisoned or chained, and wills or desires to get up and go somewhere, he can do so." Such liberty is physical, not mental or moral; it is the liberty water has to run down a plane when a liquid, and not ice; and it can not be the basis of moral accountability. Whatever will the creature has, is forced upon him; the Atheist would say by the strongest motive; the theologian, by the power of God. At any rate, the machine is made, and as made so it must run. When Edwards speaks "of such a providential disposing and determining of men's moral actions," he means that God touches the spring of action—the cause—and makes "a moral necessity" of those acts. "The sequence" of this divinely-caused will, Edwards says, "no advocate of philosophical necessity is ever heard to deny." Thus on one point—the main point in both—Atheism and religion, philosophy and Christianity, Hume and Edwards are in agreement.

Before proceeding further in this discussion, courtesy and Christian charity demand that we credit the theological necessitarians with a deep religious character and a consecration of life to the good of humanity. They were not Stoics; they were not materialists; they had no sympa-

thy with infidelity, and no men ever lived who were more valiant for what they regarded the truth. They had inherited the doctrine of necessity from their ancestors, and, in the spirit of loyalty to the past and duty to the present, they labored to make the most of such light as they had. The outrages they were compelled to perpetrate upon logic were smothered over by the plea of "mystery," "the deep things of God," "the weakness of the human understanding," etc. Whilst, therefore, we deal with their false logic and heathenish doctrine without any mercy, we shall cherish the most profound respect for the men. Thomas Chalmers, one of the greatest men and the greatest pulpit orator Scotland ever produced—his gorgeous periods often remind us of the rhetoric of Ingersoll—uses the following language in exposition of the doctrine of theological necessity:

"The denial of this doctrine supposes God to create a world and not reserve in his own hand the management of its concerns. Though it should concede to him an absolute sovereignty over all matter, it deposes him from his sovereignty over the region of created minds, that far more dignified and interesting portion of his work. The greatest events of the history of the universe are those which are brought about by the agency of willing and intelligent beings; and the enemies of the doctrine invest every one of these beings with some sovereign and independent principle

of freedom, in virtue of which it may be asserted of this whole class of events that they happened, not because they were ordained of God, but because the creatures of God, by their own uncontrolled power, brought them into existence. . . . All this carries along with it so complete a dethronement of God . . . that . . . the doctrine in question is at this moment receiving a very general support from the speculations of infidel as well as Christian philosophers. . . .

“But let us carry the commanding influence of Deity into the higher world of intelligent and moral beings. *Let us not erect the will of the creature into an independent principle.* Let us not conceive that the agency of man can bring about *one single iota* of deviation from the plans and the purposes of God, or that he can be thwarted and compelled to vary, in a single case, by the movement of any of those subordinate beings whom he himself has created. There may be a diversity of operations, but it is God who worketh *all* in all. Look at the resolute and independent man [bad as well as good], and you there see the purposes of the human mind entered upon with decision, and followed up by vigorous and successful execution. But *these* only make up *one* diversity of *God's* operations. The will of man, active and spontaneous and fluctuating, as it appears to be, is an instrument in his hand; and he *turns* it at his pleasure, and he brings other instruments to *act* upon it, and he *plies* it with all

its excitements, and he measures the force and proportion of each of them, and every step of every individual [bad as well as good] *receives* as determinate a character from the hand of God as every mile of a planet's orbit. . . . The power of God knows no exceptions. It is *absolute* and *unlimited*; and while it embraces the vast, it carries its *resistless* influence to all the *minute* and unnoticed diversities of existence. It reigns and operates through all the *secrecies* of the inner man. It *gives birth* to every *purpose* [good or bad]. It gives impulse to every desire. It gives shape and color to every conception. It wields an entire ascendancy over *every* attribute of the mind." (Sermon.)

Protestant writers, from the time of Luther to Dr. McCosh, who still lives—many of them men of great worth and ability—have accepted Chalmers's exposition of the doctrine of necessity. It seemed to them to be demanded by a proper conception of the sovereignty and power of God. A more inexcusable or fatal error could not well be committed. As they regarded the doctrine to be a true expression of God's glory, they cared but little for logical inferences, or for the abuses which might be made of it. Volumes, sufficient in number and bulk to make a respectable library, might be produced which bear exclusively upon this point, and it was with this kind of reading that, in early life, the mind of Ingersoll became saturated and disgusted.

§ 4. THE WONDER IS THAT ANY MAN CAN BE A
FATALIST AND A CHRISTIAN.

Logically it seems to be a moral impossibility. Let any one read the following from Dr. Dick, one of the most popular writers of modern times, and then ask, What is left for me to do?

“Here we come to a question which has engaged the attention, and exercised the ingenuity, and perplexed the wits of men in every age. If God has foreordained whatever comes to pass, the whole series of events is *necessary*, and human liberty is taken away. Men are passive instruments in the hands of their Maker. They can do nothing but what they are secretly and irresistibly impelled to do; they are not, therefore, responsible for their actions, and God is the author of sin. . . . By this theory human actions appear to be as *necessary* as the motions of matter according to the laws of gravitation and attraction; and man seems to be a machine, conscious of his movements and consenting to them, but impelled by something different from himself.” (Lectures on Theology.)

It was Ingersoll's revolt from this doctrine which led him, not out of Fatalism, as it should have done, but into the Atheistic conception of it, where we now find him. In clinging to necessity he denies, and very properly we think, that the cause of it can be a God of infinite perfections. Could he succeed in striking off the shackles of

fatality, and investing physical and moral nature with constitutional law, the whole universe would present to him an aspect he has never yet beheld.

§ 5. FATALISM IS ROOTED IN IDEALISTIC THEOLOGICAL PHILOSOPHY.

It has been said of Spinoza that "he was a God-intoxicated man;" but the intoxication was not spiritual nor moral, but logical. With him the term God embraced two ideas—extension and thought—and these he handled simply as factors in an argument, and nothing more. Ingersoll accepts the universe as Spinoza conceived it, with God left out.

But modern Christianity as well as current philosophy have become infected with what is known as Idealism, whose only tendency is to some form or modification of Pantheism or indefinable Infinitism. Traces of these speculations are found in all forms of current infidelity.

Herman Lotze, deceased, and his best living representative, Dr. Borden P. Bowne, of Boston University, are the champions of the speculations referred to. Lotze says:

"And the most desperate efforts to find in the continual mediating activity of God the bond to which it is due, that the states of one thing become the efficient causes of change in another, can not obviate our speculative scruples, as long as they separate God and things from one another, in the same way as individual things used to be

separated from one another. For these views, too, only double the unsolved problem—they suppose an action of things upon God, and a reaction of God upon them, and explain neither the action nor the reaction.” [A purely materialistic conception of God.] “It has seemed indispensable to remove this separation, and in a substantial community of being between all things to find the possibility of the states of one becoming efficient causes of the changes of another; for only thus can the change which any one of them experienced be at the same time a state of the Infinite.” He teaches that in one all-embracing Being the plurality of finite things is contained. All which exists is but one Infinite Being, which stamps upon individual things, in fitting forms, its own ever-similar and self-identical nature.

Professor Bowne puts this abstract philosophy into the concrete form, as follows:

“We have seen that the Infinite mediates *all* interaction of the finite, and hence that all affections of ourselves—thoughts, feelings, and purposes—are immediately from the Infinite; *God is the cause of causes*, and the true objective ground of *our* changing states. . . . The cosmos can be nothing other than a mode of divine energizing, which has the *form* of perception in the mind. . . . God, who embraces all finite spirits in his own existence, would produce in them a consistent world vision. . . . For God the world is only a thought and not a *reality*; in his

relation to finite minds it is only a rule for producing ideas. Beyond this the world has no existence.”*

All this is terribly plain. Only an idiot could mistake the meaning of these authors. The god of their conceptions is the origin and active cause of all things, even the crimes which have made earth groan beneath its burden of woe.

§6. IDEALISM REFUTED.

Idealism, the most vain and empty form of speculation that ever perplexed the mind of man, is based on the assumption that it is impossible for man to perceive or know that an external world, as a reality, exists. Subjectively he has ideas and impressions in regard to it, and his knowledge is limited to these—he can not affirm that there is anything external to himself answering to his ideas and impressions.

Let us look into this business a little. What is man? Is he a being, an individual? and if so, in what does his *entity* consist? His hand, his foot, or any part of his body, or his body as a whole? No; none of these—not if he is an individual entity. The matter of the body is in a state of constant flux, and it is not the same substance two days in succession. Is not the man proper a *mind*, or an intelligence of the spirit order? So we hold. And what is the life of the

* Metaphysics, pp. 457, 467, 468, 470.

body? It is not the mind, nor any part of it. Is it not the builder, the animator, and the conservator of the body? So we hold. Well I, as a man, test the flavor of an orange, and, having a tongue provided for my use, I, the man, apply it to the juice of the orange, and a specific effect is produced, which I call a sensation. The sensation is not in the mind; it is not in the *matter* of the tongue, for matter is matter; it can be nothing else, and it is incapable of sensation. The sensation called taste *is then a vital* phenomenon external to mind, and it, together with its significance, I, the intellect, the man, cognize. Such is the process by which I, as an active, thinking intelligence, become acquainted with an external world. Were it not for this knowledge of something external to myself, with which I am associated, I would feel myself to be a disembodied spirit.

§ 7. IDEALISM AND FATALISM PRACTICALLY IDENTICAL.

According to the writers above quoted, there is in the universe but one substance; hence they rank themselves as Monists. Materialists hold that matter is the only substance; whereas idealists teach that the infinite, whatever that abstraction may be, is the only substance. This universe, physical and moral, is an appearance, the result of "the divine activities," and only "as such does the world have any existence." As light comes moment by moment from a burning

lamp, its source and cause, so this world, with its good and evil, its joy and misery, is, in the form of an "activity," an emanation from God, and an expression of his nature and will.

Lotze has the candor to confess that the above conception of the universe can not be harmonized with the existence of sin and evil; and well he may, in the presence of that problem, give up in despair. Professor Bowne gives the corruptions of the world the go-by as follows: "Whether all men shall share in this life [immortality], or whether the great mass of spiritual rubbish shall cease with death, can not be decided by speculation."

That is well put. "Spiritual rubbish" is a good expression to designate that which has no moral character, and which it never, by any possibility, could have. But it does not strike us so favorably when we remember that this spiritual rubbish is the "activity of the Infinite." That, however, depends upon what this "infinite" stands for.

With such views of the world, or rather of God, who, in the presence of the sins and miseries of earth, can resist the temptation to find refuge in Atheism? Think of the language of Chalmers and Dick, and then, if you can, find an expression in all that Ingersoll has said, which connects the Almighty with the sins and miseries of the world more intimately than they do. The cause of his infidelity he finds in the

explanations they give of the world's sins and miseries.

Could theology be purged of the many monstrous accretions it has received from the vain speculations of men, the greater part of infidel objections to Christianity would disappear. It is but seldom that infidels bring objections to religion *per se*; but in creeds and systems of theology there is much that can never gain the assent of but a small portion of mankind.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE DOCTRINE OF NECESSITY OVERTHROWN BY
MAN'S FREE AGENCY.

THE doctrine of necessity has a tendency to abate all resentment against men; since all they do against us is by the appointment of God, it is rebellion against him to be offended with them.—HARTLEY.

§ 1. THE DIFFERENT ROOTS OF THE DOCTRINE OF
NECESSITY.

As we have seen, there are two lines of thought which inevitably place us in the vise of necessity, or, as Ingersoll says, "bind us to the Promethean rocks of fate." The first is philosophical, and applies to the mind the laws of physical and mechanical nature—the adamantine law of cause and effect; the second is theological, or rather theologico-philosophical, and postulates an infinite—an infinite Force or Sovereign as the originator and cause of all things. The two schemes are often interwoven together, the one supplementing the other, or buttressing its weak points. A multitude of accredited, orthodox theologians are as deep in the mire of this form of necessity as the most aggressive skeptics in the world. Admitting that a personal God exists, these different schools of thought are compelled to hold that he is the

cause and promoter of sin; and then, to save themselves from the shock of such an aspersion of the divine character, they strip sin—on the ground of necessity—of its moral turpitude. Ingersoll indulges in no such refinements, but boldly pleads that, if a God exists, the crimes, the sufferings, and groans of earth are his work, and must be agreeable to him. If such a God could exist, he would regard him as an “infinite fiend,” and the lesser fiends as his best beloved and most faithful servants. We confess that if God is the sole, direct, and absolute cause of all that is, then sin must be included, and Ingersoll’s conclusion is logical and irreversible. We are not, therefore, so much surprised that he is an Atheist as that all thinking men, who entertain the same opinions, have not reached the same conclusion. How the human mind can ascribe to God infinite perfections, and at the same time affirm that he puts it into the minds of men to sin and bring upon themselves an eternity of evil, is something we can not understand. The genius of man could not frame a proposition which it would be more difficult for us to accept; and the writings of Ingersoll furnish internal proof in abundance that, at one time in his life, he was brought face to face with it. His philosophy bound him, by the chains of mechanical law, fast to the rocks of fate, and the terrible destiny before him was made doubly sure by the purpose and power of an Infinite God. He wanted liberty. What could he do? Nature was beyond

his reach, and nothing was left to him but to deny the existence of God as the moral governor of the world.

§ 2. THE GROUND OF HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY.

In previous chapters we have pointed out the infidel's misconceptions and misreadings of the world we live in; and now we propose to show that his ideas of God and his moral government are far away from the truth—so far from it that the God he rejects is not at all the Being we worship. He can not reject the god of his imagination more energetically than we do.

We flatter ourselves that we have in hands such an array of the undeniable facts of nature, as can be wrought into a frame-work of government by law, as will render impossible the conception of God as in any sense the author or cause of the miseries of the world. We expect to show that man has been endowed by his Maker with the ability, at the same time and under the same circumstances, to do either right or wrong, and that the moral evil of the world is the result of his bad conduct. I am aware that all classes of necessitarians will most energetically deny these propositions, and it is incumbent upon us to enter upon a brief exposition of the human will—the base of all virtue and responsibility.

We affirm that it is impossible for God to make or compel any intelligent being to be either sinful or virtuous or happy. Absurdities, contra-

dictions, and lies—multitudes of them—are possible in this world, but it is not possible for God to be the author of any of them. The Scriptures clearly recognize this fact. They say he “can not lie,” can not be “tempted of evil,” “can not deny himself,” “can not swear by a greater than himself,” “can not look upon iniquity;” and in addition to these five “can not,” many more might be added.

Thus he can not create two parallel ranges of mountains without there being a valley between them; he can not make it that a Washington never lived, nor can he impart virtue or vice to a mechanical, physical, or compulsory act. If I put a dagger into the hand of a child, and then drive it to her mother’s heart, no fault can be attached to the child for the deed—I am the murderer; and if I compel one who has bread to feed it to a neighbor who is perishing because of hunger, and life is thereby saved, the owner of the bread deserves no credit. And why? This is the crucial question, and the answer to it should be as transparent as the noonday. We then affirm, as a fundamental element in the moral government of God, *that an act to be virtuous or sinful must be an incarnation, or an expression of the purpose, will, or intention of the being who performs it.* We neither praise nor blame the hands of a clock for the time they mark, because their movements, whether correct or not, are mechanical, and utterly devoid of purpose or intention.

§ 3. THERE CAN BE NO ESCAPE FROM THE MORAL GOVERNMENT OF GOD.

As we go on, let us carry with us the great truth that man, with the different ways of right-doing and wrong-doing before him, as the subject of God's moral government, *is compelled*—yes, necessity, *from which there is no escape*, is *upon him*—to decide or determine to pursue the one way or the other. Compulsion to act is as firm as fate. There is no way open before him but the line of moral responsibility; for neutral ground there is none. The moment we leave the territory of right, we enter the world of wrong. If the government of God were so that in some cases men were compelled to choose the path of virtue or crime, the world might be benefited or injured thereby; but all such acts would be mechanical, and without a moral character.

That the reader may the more clearly see the doctrine we antagonize, as presented from a theological stand-point, we will spread it before the reader in the language of Dr. Dick. He says:

“Those actions are free which are the *effects* of volition. [The primary question refers to the origin of the volition.] In whatever manner the state of mind which gave rise to volition has been produced, the liberty of the agent is neither greater nor less. It is his will alone which is to be considered, and *not the means* by which it has been determined. If God foreordained certain

actions, and placed men in that position that the actions would certainly take place, agreeably to the laws of the mind, men are nevertheless moral agents, because they act voluntarily, and are responsible for the actions which consent has made their own. Liberty does not consist in the power of acting or not acting, but in acting from choice. The choice is determined by something in the mind itself, or by something external influencing the mind; but, *whatever is the cause*, the choice makes the action free and the agent *accountable*. If this definition be admitted, you will perceive that it is possible to reconcile the freedom of the will with absolute decrees, but we have not got rid of every difficulty; for by this theory human actions appear to be as necessary as the motions of matter according to the laws of gravitation and attraction; and man seems to be a machine, conscious of his movements and consenting to them, but *impelled by something different from himself*." *

Dr. Dick is only one of hundreds who have worked at this problem, and all have reached the conclusion that God puts into the minds of men their thoughts and wills, and that human freedom consists in having an ability to work out into practice the wills which are thus forced upon them. As whatever is in man's mind is there by compulsion, he is no more responsible for it than

* Lectures on Theology.

he is for the blood that is in his veins or the marrow that is in his bones. It is thus that the doctrine locates man outside the limits of right and wrong, and strips the world of the glory of its moral character.

To be a moral intelligence, a man must be placed above the reach of the mechanical law of cause and effect. He himself must be a self-centered origin and cause of moral action; and man is conscious, be his speculative theology and philosophy what they may, that he is endowed with such a power. This consciousness he manifests in his regard for his own behavior, and in the judgment he passes upon the conduct of others. The voice of humanity is more imperative than his logic.

§ 4. THE DIFFERENT POWERS OR DEPARTMENTS OF THE MIND.

Gradually, since the days of Bishop Butler, the world is coming to accept the Pauline conception of man—a Mind dwelling in an earthly tabernacle. Regarding, then, the Mind as the man proper, we propose to institute an examination of the powers he possesses. We shall, however, for the sake of *greater distinctness*, adopt the terminology of Professor Upham, and treat it as a unit in which three departments or powers may be distinguished—Intellect, Will, and Feeling. This conception of man, or Mind, is now nearly, if not quite, universal among psychologists, though

there may be some variation in the terms in which it is expressed.

Intellect is the workshop of thought. There all the thinking, perceiving, comparing, judging, considering, musing, reasoning, imagining, etc., are done, and intellect can do nothing but in some way *handle ideas*.

Feeling can not frame a thought nor touch an idea. It is altogether another power or department of the mind, and embraces a wide field of mental action of its own. If human feelings could be taken from man, he would be a creature of another order. Love, hate, joy, grief, desire, aversion, hope, fear, ecstasy, remorse, and despair are feelings of the mind, and they constitute a large part of human experience.

Sensibilities constitute an experience of another class. They are touch, taste, smell, etc., and originate in the *life of the sense organs*. As the organs of sense, whether in the form of bone, muscle, tissue, or nerve, are matter, and nothing but the most ordinary kind of matter, sensation can no more originate in them than in a stick or stone. A sensation, then, must be a *local, vital phenomenon*, cognized as such by the mind; hence a sensation is not a mental phenomenon, but something objective, which the mind cognizes, and whose significance it by experience learns. This knowledge is *immediate*, and it is the mind's *first and nearest cognition* of an external world. An oversight of these departments of physiology, and its

related psychology, is the only excuse that can be rendered for the existence of idealistic philosophy.

In Will there is neither thought, nor feeling, nor sensibility, nor any mental action except a pure *purpose* or *intention*, having reference to a contemplated action—to *do* this or that, to act or not to act.

That we may see the more clearly the pure action of the Will, let us isolate it from all the other powers of the mind, and examine it solely in the light of its own functions. The word *choice* is freely used by all writers on the mind, one class affirming that man has the power of choice, and the other denying it; and probably there is not another word in our language which has carried anywhere so much confusion as this word has brought into the discussion of man's free agency. The meaning of the word is equivocal, and in one of its significations it means too much. It may, and often does, express an intellectual *preference*, and such preference is not at all an act of the will. Our preferences are intellectual, and subject to the law of necessity. The farmer necessarily chooses or prefers to see his fields covered in the month of June with the growing harvest rather than with a fall of snow. When the word choice will admit of this construction, the fatalist is right. A hungry family would necessarily choose—that is, prefer—a loaf to a crumb of bread; and yet if the crumb were their own,

and it would be a theft to use the loaf, they might *will* or determine to use only the crumb. Such determination would be an act of *pure will* in *opposition* to the necessitated choice as an intellectual preference. Then, for the sake of clearness and precision, it would be well to expel the word *choice* from the discussion of the free agency of the mind.

§ 5. THE RELATION OF MOTIVES TO THE MIND.

But great minds, through many generations, in different countries, have labored to prove that the action of the will is subject to the power of the strongest motives which are brought to bear upon it. Nothing more shallow, plausible, and influential has ever been said on the subject. (1.) The conception is materialistic, and supposes that the mind is governed by mechanical law, like a pair of scales. (2.) It is a virtual and absolute denial of the existence of the will as a special part or power of the mind. (3.) Motives can have no *direct* bearing upon the will, for they are *reasons* or *considerations* addressed to the *perception* and *judgment*. In all the affairs of life, whatever course a man may take, he should be able to refer to motives as reasons for his conduct. The notion either annihilates the will or confounds it with intellect, and in either case it is invalid.

But men do not always act wisely; for they yield to the sway of passion, appetite, and feeling,

and, as a consequence, are led to wrong-doing. In such cases, is not will necessarily overborne by a stronger force? I answer, No. In such cases will does not act at all. Very likely it is dormant, or in nearly a rudimentary state. There may be a fierce conflict between conscience, which inclines to the right, and passion, which inclines to the wrong; but will, if fairly well developed, being an entirely different power of the mind, is incapable of sympathy with either. Reason has handed down to the will its decision of right and wrong in action—of what should and what should not be done—and now will has in hand the awful responsibility of determining what *shall* be done. If will determines for the right, an act of virtue has been performed; if for the wrong, a vice has been perpetrated.

§ 6. THE MIND IS A SOURCE OF ENERGY.

“The ancients,” said Leibnitz, “attributed the cause of evil to matter; but where shall we, who derive all things from God, find the source of evil?” As his answer to his own question affords us no relief whatever, we will try our own hand at it. We admit that God is the creator of all substances that exist, whether material, vital, mental, or spiritual; but we deny point-blank that he is the author of the abuses, or of the consequences of the abuses, to which any part of his creation has been subjected. In giving to

the universe a moral character, it became necessary for him to place in it intelligent beings, who should possess in themselves the source of moral action. Man's qualification to do right, *necessarily* involved the ability to do wrong. *Right doing* was the right *using* of his faculties, and *wrong doing* was the *abuse* of them. This abuse of what was good is not from God. In whatever of evil that has ever proceeded from that abuse of good, his glory was not involved. There is a glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, another of the stars, and another of man; and if in any case his glory is tarnished or turned to shame, it is man's own doing. God forces upon man neither a good nor a bad action, and all the volitional actions of the mind are its own, with either their glory or shame. It is either blasphemy or philosophical idiocy for Leibnitz to say that purposes to steal, to slander, to commit perjury, to murder, etc., are things or acts derived from God; such acts are blessings abused.

To avoid the conclusions we have reached, necessitarians have been compelled either to blot out the will or confound it with feeling. Spinoza obliterates it, and Edwards classifies it as a feeling. But the analysis of the mind made by the French psychologists has been so clear, and their appeal to consciousness so instructive, that the distinctions intellect, will, and feeling are now so fully recognized that the old Edwardsian expositions are utterly discredited and obsolete.

§ 7. THE ASPECT OF GOVERNMENT FROM THE
STAND-POINT OF FREE WILL.

If we abandon fatalism in all its forms, whether of Pantheism, Materialism, Idealism, or Divine Agency, then a moral world will take its place, so different in its construction that it will appear as a new creation; then every atom will be recognized as an individual thing and as a source of mechanical energy. This principle will be extended to the matter of the universe, and man, a moral being, will be regarded as existing on a higher plane and in another sphere, subject to other laws, having self-directive power in the realm of right and wrong, and responsible for his conduct.

§ 8. SHOULD THE HAZARDS OF POSSIBLE SIN HAVE
BEEN TAKEN AND MAN CREATED?

The Atheist may admit the conclusions we have reached, and, falling back a few steps, intrench himself upon the ground that a God of infinite perfections would not have created a moral universe, because the hazards of the venture were so great and so terrible. He should not have created anything he could not, in harmony with his own nature, absolutely control. Man should not have been made if the possibility of virtue carried with it the possibility of vice. In other words, creation should have risen no higher than the dog, the horse, the elephant, and the monkey.

This is a great question for the weak mind of man to discuss. Were his capacity enlarged a thousand-fold, I doubt if he could do it justice. There have been pure, noble, and grand men in the world, and we have no doubt that the number of such is to be so great that only the Divine Mind can count them. In a well-regulated State's-prison we see proof that the State has good laws, an incorruptible judiciary, faithful officers, and a protected people. The odium rests upon the head of the wrong-doer, and his conscience unites with the constitution of the universe and says: "This should be so. I am but reaping as I sowed."

CHAPTER XVII.

HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY FURTHER CONSIDERED.

YE, who love,
Do so each cause refer to heaven above,
E'en as its motion of necessity
Drew with it all that moves. If this were so,
Free choice in you were none; nor justice would
There should be joy for virtue, woe for ill.

—DANTE.

§ I. THE ARGUMENT STATED.

In the preceding chapter an attempt has been made to drive Atheism from the refuge it has found in the scheme of necessity, by setting forth the freedom of the will, and, as a resultant, man's responsibility for his conduct. In the form of government we present, it was made clear that, in no sense, is God the author of sin, or of any evil resulting therefrom; and that man, the culpable wrong-doer, might have walked in the ways of righteousness and reaped a harvest of blessedness. This argument is of prime importance; it is not easily grasped by the general reader; and as it leaves the Atheism of Ingersoll, in its main branch, without any support, it may be well for us to recapitulate its main points and amplify them a little further.

§ 2. THE BASAL ELEMENTS OF MAN'S ACCOUNT- ABILITY.

1. We are compelled to see that, when man is brought face to face with right and wrong, he *must* pursue the one or the other; that he can not remain inactive or take a middle course. Hence it is manifest that necessity is laid upon us to regard him as *always* under moral government.

2. Man's judgment acts under the law of necessity, and he is compelled to decide questions according to the facts or reason of the case. He can not hold that five dollars are equal to ten dollars, or that one dollar should pay a ten-dollar debt. His judgment is not, therefore, when correct, to be classed among the virtues; nor when in error, as a vice. In all cases, it is man's *duty* to seek proper information, but this is a matter of will.

3. Feeling and sensibility play an important part in the affairs of human life, but as they are subject to the law of necessity, they do not form the basis of responsibility. That a hungry man *desires* bread, and *rejoices* in its possession, is what we might expect from our knowledge of cause and effect. When we see him manifest such feelings, we give him neither praise nor blame. There is no reason why we should, as the meritorious and moral elements are not involved. Sensations are partly physical and partly vital, and come under

the law of necessity. I am not in any way responsible for the sensation that is awakened by the taste of an orange, because in that experience I am wholly passive. It is not my fault that the taste of an apple and an orange are not alike. My joy at the birth and grief at the death of a child are not sins, for they are emotional necessities.

4. Motives are of the nature of reasons or considerations *for* action in one way and not in another; they are addressed to the *judgment*, and their *direct* influence goes no further; they do not touch the will, though they may reach the feelings. Motives can be brought to bear directly upon the will only as we form a materialistic conception of it, subject to force or pressure from without—like weights on scales, or, not to be too coarse, the attractions or repulsions of a magnet.

5. The will is a power or part of the mind which is wholly distinct from intellect, feeling, and sensibility. It does not in the least partake of their nature, and hence does not come under the law of necessity, by which *they* are governed. It is not the thinking or feeling, but the determining power of the mind in matters of action. As all psychologists, since the days of Comte, have recognized the three distinctions of power or faculty in the mind—known as Intellect, Will, and Feeling—we have, without argument, availed ourselves of this conception of it as a settled truth. Man may act automatically, or he may act from the

impulse of feeling, but all the actions of the will are self-originated and self-directed. The will is a fountain or a primal source of action; all its acts are self-originated. In this respect man is exempt from the law of cause and effect as it exists in the material and vital worlds. In binding nature fast in fate, God left free the human will.

6. The Creator has invested the will with the awful power and responsibility—after the decisions of the judgment have been rendered—of performing the right or perpetrating the wrong in action. Kant speaks from a consciousness of the true nature and office of the will when he says: “Whenever I am in one of two positions I tremble,—one is, when I have a view of the vastness of the universe; the other, when I reflect that *I may do wrong*.” The will is the imperial power, and decides what *shall* be done or what shall *not* be done. A determination of the will to act for the right is a virtue in the person so determining, and a determination to act for the wrong is a vice in the person so determining. Such is the source and origin of human virtue and vice, and they can have no other source or origin.

7. It was through this door that sin, with all its train of evils and sorrows, entered into the world. Had man been created all intellect, and of so high an order that he would have always thought right and never made a mistake, he possibly might have been an interesting character or machine, but he would not have been a moral

being; or had he been intellect and feeling—a ship without rudder or pilot—and feeling had been as pure and uniform as his intellect was correct, and he had been placed in some moral current, beyond the reach of temptation or the necessity of a struggle, that would sweep him onward without the possibility of failure to his destined goal, still he would not have been a moral being, any more than a good pine-log borne to the gulf on the bosom of the Mississippi.

8. Morality is always the act of the will, in cases where an election is to be made between *performing* the right or the wrong; and in all such cases either course is possible. The continuous election of the right, followed by faithful practice, results in the formation of a strong and permanent *habit* of right-doing; and this habit of virtue becomes in man his character-column, not easily shaken or crushed. The continuous election of wrong-doing, followed by a willing and greedy practice, results in the habits of vice; and these habits crystallize into a bad character, not easily changed. Morally, good or bad, the man is what he makes himself. Character is a growth; and man, good or bad, is what he *grows* to be. The harvest will be like the seed *he* sows.

9. The human will, then, and not the Infinite God, has ever been the fountain from which has flowed forth the opposite and contrary streams of virtue and vice in all ages of human history; the one a magnificent current, enriching and

beautifying everything that came within its reach ; the other, of Stygian blackness, a gehenna of corruption, and covered with the vapor of hell.

10. As neither virtue nor vice can possibly exist anywhere as a matter of compulsion, without the endowments of the will above described, man could not be a moral being ; and, in that case, the great end of his creation would disappear. Experience, observation, consciousness, and the cold laws of logic demand that man, the evil doer, should be responsible for the wrong he does ; and to ascribe the blame due to him to the Almighty, is worse than fiendish—it is blasphemy. Could we not see so clearly the source and cause of sin in man, there might be some excuse for error ; but as the case stands, there is none.

§ 3. THE NATURE OF VIRTUE.

For the sake of the illustration it will afford, let us go into the garden of Eden, and, if possible, obtain a nearer and a clearer view of the nature of virtue and ground of responsibility. Man was created a rational, thinking, upright being, capable of knowing God and admiring his works. This, so far, was “good,” very good. But there may be suns and stars, and earth and reason—all “good ;” but not the kind of good known as virtue. A whole galaxy of excellencies might be brought together, and virtue not be among them. Belief of a kind may be associated with reason, and still virtue be wanting ; for “the devils

believe and tremble." We may go further, and add to the intelligence of the first man feelings and sensibilities of the purest order; and whilst these are also "good," they can not be considered as virtues; virtue, as we use the term, being the antithesis of sin. Intellect and feeling are constitutional elements, things created, but virtue can not be made for one person by another. A "good" watch, a "good" knife, and a "good" engine can be made; but to such pieces of machinery the quality of virtue can not be ascribed.

Right and wrong, as objects of consideration, were in the world before man was made; the moral element involved was among the first things which arrested his attention, and so long as his will was firmly and steadily bent on doing the right, his virtue increased in strength; but when he determined to do wrong by an act of disobedience, virtue was crushed and sin became ascendant. Virtue comes out of, or rather comes to, us through the right action of the will, and vice is the result of wrong action, as surely and as inevitably as the operation of the law of gravitation. We may summarize what has been said as follows: Intellect—thought, reason, perception, imagination, judgment, etc.; and these, though sometimes correct, but often mistakes, are not virtues, for they are necessities. Feeling and sensibility—love, joy, hate, hope, sorrow, taste, smell, touch, etc.; and these, though in the aggregate they may be a mixture of the good and bad, are not virtues,

for they are necessitated. Will—the purpose, the determination, the resolve *to do* the right, is the only faculty which possesses a moral quality; this is virtue, and the opposite is vice.

§ 4. THE FUTILE DISCUSSIONS OF THE WILL WITH A FALSE PSYCHOLOGY.

With a correct psychology before us, it is a simple and easy matter to set forth the freedom of the will and man's responsibility for his conduct. Why, then, from the days of the Stoics to the present time, has the question of man's free agency, and consequent accountability, engaged the attention of the greatest thinkers the world has ever produced without reaching an agreement? We answer, Until within the past half century the science of psychology was unknown. In the days of Edwards this science amounted to nothing, and, as a result, his work on the Will is probably the most consummate blending of strength and weakness, of keenness and obtuseness of intellect, and of truth and error, that was ever written. He had not the faintest conception of what the will is, as now seen in the light of science. From the first to the last of his book he worked in chaos, and there he left his readers. Regarding the will sometimes as a fancy, then as a feeling, then as a sensation, but never as a self-originating, determining power in the field of action, he gives us no light whatever on the subject. He commenced the discussion as a necessitarian,

as if all things were by God, though controlled by physical and mechanical law, utterly oblivious to the different character of the facts and laws of mind. Above this was the sovereignty of God, and his omnipotence extended to every thought and feeling and act of the human mind. In the absence of settled scientific principles in regard to the mind, to which absolute allegiance must be paid, he wrote as if he had a roving commission to make the mind what suited him best. His work was an incubus, which the ages following have been laboring to throw off. They have so far succeeded that only antediluvian thinkers at the present day show his work any respect, except for its transcendent ability.

Edwards's work on the Will went far to lay the foundation of the infidelity of David Hume. Most students of psychology have mixed the study of books with the study of mind, and the outcome has been more or less confusion. A special aptitude for this branch of science is as necessary to success as it is for the study of music. But the science is progressing, and never more rapidly than at present.

With a psychology that is rigidly correct—as correct in its facts and terminology as are required by geometry—there is no trouble in tracing the powers of the mind and their logical relations. For such work the Stoics, Leibnitz, Hume, and Edwards, had no chart or compass; they confounded elements which have nothing in common, and in the

resultant chaos the ground of human responsibility was covered up and lost to view.

§ 5. THE CALAMITIES OF A BAD EDUCATION.

Having in early life been caught by the rushing tide of a false theology, supplemented by the current of a false philosophy, and psychology being an unknown science, it is not strange that a man of Ingersoll's ability and temperament should become impaled upon the crags of Atheism, and feel that he was "a Prometheus lashed to the rocks of fate."

Colonel Ingersoll has for many years received unstinted praise as a rhetorician, and what is withheld from him as a thinker is fully awarded as a borrower; but it is a mistake to suppose that he is exclusively indebted to infidel writers for his choicest thoughts. Let us suppose that, in a supreme effort to reason out of existence the theory that a God exists, in his own way, with all his rhetorical flourishes and fancy colorings, he expresses the following sentiments, can anything be found, in all that he has ever said or written, that is more revolting?

"Since mind can not act any more than matter without a divine agency, it is absurd to suppose that men can be left to the freedom of their own will to act or not to act independently of divine influence. There must be, therefore, the exercise of a divine agency in *every human action*, without which it is impossible to conceive that

God should govern moral agents, and make mankind act in *perfect conformity to his designs*. . . . He is now exercising his *powerful and irresistible agency upon the heart of every one* of the human race, and producing either *holy* or *unholy* exercises in it. . . . It is often thought and said that nothing more was necessary on God's part in order to fit Pharaoh for destruction than barely leave him to himself. But God knew that no external means and motives would be sufficient of themselves to form his moral character. He determined, therefore, to *operate* on his *heart* itself, and cause him to put forth certain evil exercises in view of certain external motives. When Moses called upon him to let the people go, God stood by him and *moved* him to refuse. When the people departed from his kingdom, God stood by him and moved him to pursue after them with increased malice and revenge. And what God did on such particular occasions, he did at all times."

Did the lips of Colonel Ingersoll ever express sentiments more blasphemous and revolting than are contained in the above language, carefully written by Dr. Emmons, a New England clergyman? And yet page after page might be filled to the same effect from the writings of Emmons, Chalmers, Dick, Edwards, McCosh, Hodge, and others. Such language, falling from the lips of these great divines, has the smack of pious cant which has done much to give the doctrine of necessity currency in the world; but the same conceptions of

God, dressed in the garb of scorn and blasphemy by Ingersoll, excite our contempt, and we reject him as well as his words. It is this conception of God obtained from the system of theology in which he was educated, supported by the philosophy he had embraced, which lies at the basis of his Atheism.

Edwards closes with an air of triumph an elaborate argument on this question as follows:

“Is it not better that the good and evil which happens in God’s world should be *ordered*, regulated, bounded, and *determined* by the *good pleasure* of an infinitely wise Being than to leave these things to fall out by chance, and to be determined by those causes which have no understanding in them?” For one I answer, No. If you want me to believe in the existence of God, you must not present him to me as ordering and regulating theft, injustice, debauchery, drunkenness, falsehood, perjury, hatred, cruelty, murder, and other crimes beneath which creation groans.

I prefer to take the world as I find it, and hold the guilty parties responsible for the crimes they commit. If Pharaoh moved simply as he was acted upon by the Almighty, and Moses did the same, pray tell us wherein was either deserving of praise or blame? As for me, I am sure that, with such antecedents, I would as willingly stand in the judgment in the shoes of the one as the other. Instead of being surprised that Ingersoll is an Atheist, the wonder is that any one

who holds to the doctrine of necessity can be anything else?

We are familiar with the multitude of efforts which have been made to harmonize free will and man's responsibility, on the one hand, with the "ordering, regulating, bounding, and determining" of man's sins by the divine Being, on the other; and all such efforts but remind us that it is impossible that a figure can at the same time possess the form of a square and a circle. No truth can be clearer than this: If the state or disposition of the will is derived from God, then God is the cause and author of the act that follows from it. These authors mock us when they affirm that nothing takes place without the action of God as the moving cause, and then deny that *he* is the author of sin. Why hold man responsible for his sins since he is as passive therein as he is for the beating of his heart? The only freedom allowed to man is the freedom an engine possesses to move according to its internal mechanism—he is simply allowed to act out the will of God, good or bad, as the case may be. If the doctrine is true, this is not a moral world.

The voice of humanity, prolonged through all the ages of history, which voice is the voice of God speaking through man, has rendered a verdict on this subject, which is:

1. That a necessitated act is without moral character. The act may be good or bad in different ways, but the moral element is wanting to it.

2. For intentional wrong-doing man deserves, and must necessarily receive, punishment; that is, he must suffer the consequences.

The man or woman whose debaucheries have rendered either of them morally or physically loathsome to society, can find no fault or ground of complaint if abandoned to misery and contempt. After every palliating circumstance has been weighed, the residuum of judgment left will be that the sufferer is but reaping the seed sown by his own hand.

Every system of government, its civil jurisprudence included, that was ever founded among men, rested upon the basis of man's responsibility for his conduct.

3. It is also the verdict of humanity that well-doing deserves credit and should receive applause.

In judging others, either to approve or to condemn, man is governed by a law, written upon his own heart, which can not be eradicated; conscious that where there is right there might have been wrong, and where there is wrong there might have been right, he praises or condemns in accordance with the act done.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE POWER OF CHARACTER IN THE MORAL WORLD.

VIRTUE

Stands like the sun, and all which rolls around
Drinks life and light and glory from her aspect.

—BYRON.

When consternation turns the good man pale,
Where, where, for shelter, shall the guilty fly?

—YOUNG.

§ 1. MAN AS SEEN FROM THE STAND-POINT OF
NECESSITY.

Having explored the prison-house of fate, and found it a fancy structure, the important task remains of leading out the captives, taking off their shackles, and clothing them in the robes of duty and responsibility. A man lashed to the wild-horse of passion, or, like Prometheus, fastened to the rocks of fate, is a poor, pitiable creature, presenting to the universe a life that is not worth living; but man as a chief factor in the moral universe, holding in his own hands a destiny which is the result of his own acts, and which may exalt him to immortal greatness or overwhelm him with indescribable infamy, is quite another being. In infidelity we see the one picture of humanity, and in Christianity the other.

From the stand-point we have at last attained,

the merits and demerits of conduct, and the necessary outflow from character, good or bad, can be distinctly seen. The lurid pictures which Ingersoll delights to draw of the agonies and tortures the supposed God wantonly inflicts upon the damned, are revolting to the last degree, and principally because, if they contained a shade of truth, the Infinite One would be implicated in an infamy that is deeper than the depths of hell. He can find no justification of his Atheism, only in the wild and extravagant caricatures he is able to give of God and man's eternity.

As a necessitarian he can have but the faintest conception of merit and demerit, or the greatness, the value, and the inevitable results of a self-built character. The thought seems to aggravate him that the same blessedness does not attend the righteous and the wicked; both characters, as he conceives, being creatures of necessity. The idea of future rewards and punishments he can not endure for a moment. The antidote for all this ranting and raving, whether from the platform or in pamphlets or magazines, must be found, not in the action of the Almighty, but in the consideration of the inevitable effects of the conduct of a free and responsible man.

§ 2. MORAL LAW IN THE SPIRITUAL KINGDOM.

Let us recall the fact that the world is governed by law, and that the specific law of each department thereof is at the same time an expression of

the *will* of God as well as of the *nature* of the thing governed. If the waters of the globe, through all the ages of the past, have remained unchanged, it is because natural law, in the formation of the molecule, is now exactly what it has ever been. As we rise in the scale of being to man, the inflexible and imperative character of *moral* law becomes more apparent. As a moral being and under moral government, when in the presence of duty or of right and wrong, *man must act*—there can be no escape. All who try to avoid responsibility meet with no better success than Pilate did with Christ at his bar. The atoms of oxygen and hydrogen, under natural law, can give us the water, and nothing more; but men, as spirit intelligences, acting according to moral law, and aided by the Divine Spirit, develop, out of the deep and rich resources of their own being, wisdom and power and glory and immortality. But if the same men determine to antagonize moral law, they outrage their own nature; they suicidally lay upon it the hand of violence, and, as a consequence, bring upon themselves, as evil-doers, judgment, condemnation, tribulation, and anguish. In these terrible and extreme results there is, as cause, nothing but the different relations the parties have chosen to sustain to a moral government.

§ 3. THE MIND'S CAPACITY FOR JOY OR WOЕ.

It is a mighty stride from an atom to a man, and yet it is a stride from material littleness to

moral vastness. Man may carry his greatness into the realm of the intelligent, the spiritual, the lovely, and the beautiful, or he may array himself against truth and justice and right; he may turn away from the lovely, the good, and the beneficent, and the vacuum caused by the absence of positive excellencies will be supplied by negative evils, such as falsehood, injustice, carnality, and things hateful and hideous; but in either case the superior capacity of man is apparent. In essence humanity can not change; but in the modifications of its development, it is capable of taking on an indefinite number of shades of character. In this respect man is in harmony with nature, of which he forms a part. Carbon, loosely put together, forms charcoal, stone-coal, plumbago, lamp-black, and many other substances; but subject it to the action of crystallization, and it forms the bright, flashing diamond. The nature or essence of the substance, however, has not changed, for the diamond may be changed into lamp-black. Aluminium, the substance bricks are made of, when crystallized with oxygen, becomes the beautiful ruby. Human nature is subject to changes and modifications equally marked, and the consequences must be correspondingly great. The beautiful, affectionate boy Nero became a monster, and killed his mother. Once Arnold may have been as pure a patriot as Washington; and when chosen, Judas was as worthy as John to be a disciple of Christ. The devout and deeply spir-

itual Henry Kirke White was once a noisy infidel, and men found the lowest down in the drunkard's gutter were once worthy ministers of the gospel. Mary Magdalene became a model of purity and spirituality. We thus see that the possibilities of human nature, for either the good or the bad, are immense. It may sink to the profoundest depths of degradation, or it may rise to the most commanding heights of excellency, and the misery is as inevitable in the one case as the felicity in the other. In both cases we see exemplified nothing but the moral law of cause and effect—a law which, at the same time, contains an expression of the nature of the thing governed and of the wisdom and will of God.

§ 4. TRUTH IS OBSCURED BY THE PRESENT MIXED
CONDITION OF THINGS.

There is in this life such a mixture and commingling of the good and the bad of all possible shades, that it is not easy to form an opinion from society, as we see it, of the possible and legitimate outcome of mere character. Let us suppose that the bad of every grade and hue—the unjust, the false, the impure, the thief, the highwayman, the robber, the gambler, the inebriate, the deceiver, the traitor, the perjurer, the murderer, etc.—were removed from all the *diversions* of business, politics, amusement, and learning, such as society affords, and were brought together on some immense island, and there abandoned, without law

or government, to the free working of their own depravities,—what would be the result? Among such a mass of human beings, each would perceive the worthlessness of all the others in the light of his own character, and mutual respect would be impossible. There would be no ground anywhere for reverence or love. An all-ingulfing selfishness in each one would render impossible good-will toward any. In the absence of the force and moral restraints of government; of the baton, brass buttons, etc., of the policeman; the ever-wakeful eye of society, with its millions of property to care for; the church-steeple, the tolling bell, and the fear of God,—each individual of the bold and reckless mass would feel at liberty to act out to its fullest extent the character he had formed. A consciousness of degradation, in the absence of all hope for the future, like a vulture, would prey upon every heart. For the lack of a *capacity* to receive gladness, there could be no ingress of joys from without. In the make-up of human nature the moral element is the main ingredient. It is the key-stone of the arch of character, and its fall ingulfs the spirit in ruins. The fiery fever in the blood is not so distressing to the vital organism as is the inward sense of wrong and degradation, which ever cleaves, like a moral leprosy, to the soul of the unjust and the vile. Each one associated only with its kind, there could be in such a society no generosity, no sympathy, no fellowship, no confidence; but rather

malice, hatred, and revenge would prevail. The pictures given us by the poet and the novelist of the inward history of the profligate are generally true to the letter. He is represented as an utter stranger to the delights of an honorable life. As he knows nothing about them, they have no attractions for him, and his sordid nature is incapable of reciprocating the good faith and fair dealings of others. He can no more live contrary to the law of his ignoble passions and appetites than the thistle can grow figs or the leopard change its spots. We utterly forget the nature of law if we suppose that such a low, creeping creature can know or enjoy anything of the nature of real legitimate human happiness. Such men have in hand the bitter fruits of their own misdoing, and they *must* eat them. In the conviction of their own worthlessness, which they carry hourly wherever they go, we may see the beginning of whatever wretchedness there is to come. In forfeited respect they feel that they have lost their most valuable earthly inheritance.

In the writings of a profound philosophical thinker I find the following terrible words:

“The loathing and remorse, the felt and conscious degradation, the dreariness of heart that follow in the train of guilty indulgence here,—these form but the beginning of sorrows, and are but the presages and precursors of that deeper wretchedness which, by an unrepealed law of moral nature, the same character will entail on

its possessor in another state of being. They are but the penalties of vice in embryo, and they may give at least the conception of what are these penalties in full. It will add—it will add inconceivably to the darkness and disorder of that moral chaos in which the impenitent shall spend their eternity—where the uproar of the bacchanalian and the licentious emotions are thus super-added to the selfish and malignant passions of our nature, and where the frenzy of unsated desire, followed up by the languor and compensation of its worthless indulgence, shall make up the sad history of many an unhappy spirit.”*

§ 5. THE UNION OF LIBERTY AND LAW IN THE FORMATION OF CHARACTER.

As we find the element of moral right and wrong solely among human beings they only possess the ability to select the one and reject the other. And even this freedom is preceded and followed by an iron necessity. In the presence of a right and a wrong act, we must determine to pursue the one or the other; and, be our determination which it may, moral results must follow. I repeat, act we must, and the effects of the act are inevitable; man can determine only what the act shall be. The nature of the act determines the result.

Man is like the rest of nature, only out of the

* Chalmers.

character which he forms will arise the laws of his destiny, good or bad. The world to come is but a continuance of this in a somewhat modified form. The character we form here will be our individuality there; and heaven can be nothing but its outcome, favored with suitable environments. And, on the other hand, the retributions of the wicked will be but the necessary outcome of the moral nature they carry into eternity, and the environments into which such a nature must drift. They must receive the wages of sin, because *for that* they worked. Payment must be made and accepted according to law and agreement. Everything there will be, in another form, the intentions here worked out. The well-cultured ground embraced within the law of liberty here will become a fixed and ever-progressive character there, with its legitimate fruit.

§ 6. THE HARMONY OF THE BIBLE AND PHILOSOPHY IN REGARD TO CHARACTER.

In connection with an inspired picture of the judgment I find these words—and words more awful are not to be found in the Bible—"Let him that is unjust be unjust still, and let him that is filthy be filthy still; let him that is righteous be righteous still, and let him that is holy be holy still." Fact and philosophy teach the same lesson in regard to character and its fruits. It follows that no intelligence in the infinite domains of the Almighty can possibly be a lost outcast who has

a *capacity* or *character* to enjoy heaven. Heaven without a character *suited* to enjoy it—spiritual and holy—would be like a gallery of paintings to the blind or music to the deaf.

Character, then, should be regarded as the overwhelming interest of life. Purity in character is a positive virtue, and the moral vacuum caused by its absence can be filled only by sin. If, then, heaven is the inevitable outcome of purity, what must be the result when the injustice and filthiness of the soul become fixed forever? In nothing does the infidel manifest the shallowness of his views more than in his conception of man as a creature whose capacity is limited to earth, and whose highest interests should be concentrated on the pleasures and indulgences of the present hour. Our earthly environments amount to something; but nothing deserves the high name of happiness which does not well up from the fountain of a pure character. It is to make room for character that we have tried to break the iron chains of necessity.

§ 7. THE OUTCOME OF CHARACTER REGARDED AS CONSEQUENCES, NOT REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS.

In his letter to Dr. Field, Colonel Ingersoll affirms that rewards and punishments do not and can not exist; he admits, however, that evil consequences follow bad conduct, and that good results follow good conduct; and “that the relation of

these causes and effects can no more be changed than the relation of the diameter to the circumference of a circle." Very well. Here again I am happy to agree substantially with the skeptic. Call rewards and punishments consequences, if you please, you shall be accommodated. But if the misery of a bad man comes upon him as a consequence of his crimes, why charge his shame and wretchedness to the Almighty? And if a man be bad, and carry his bad character into the next world, and logic compel us to hold that such character will be attended by evil consequences there, why fly into a passion, and say that none but an "infinite fiend" could have brought such things about? We hold that the results of virtue are not only consequences, but that they may properly be called rewards, because they express the divine will as embodied in the constitution of nature. The same principle holds in regard to vice and its attendant misery.

§ 8. ONE GROUND OF NECESSITY NO BETTER THAN ANOTHER.

The facts of the universe are not modified by any interpretation we may make of them, or by any method we may adopt for accounting for their origin. It seems that Ingersoll can lovingly embrace the doctrine of necessity if it be self-caused and self-sustained; but if it be alleged that a personal God is the cause and author of the same condition of things, then his existence is to be

denied, on the ground that a Being of infinite perfections would not create such a world as this. Materialistic philosophy spins out one of these lines of thought, and Augustinian theology the other. As both theories teach the same thing, if one be the true interpretation of nature, why not the other? It seems, then, that the objection touches not the doctrine of necessity, but the cause of it. Such a world as this, it seems, might be tolerated as the product of unreasoning matter, but not as the creation of God. But reason we have, and we ask: Did dirt or a God conceive, then produce this universe? By crushing all forms of moral necessity, and giving to each department of nature its proper place, this universe furnishes the highest and clearest expression we can conceive of God.

§ 9. THE INDIVIDUALITY AND INDEPENDENCE OF MAN.

Man is not, then, a creature of necessity, as if interwoven with nature as a part of its complicated mechanism, but he stands forth in his own proper person, in an important sense, as one of the lords of creation. Instead of worshiping the personified forces of nature—the winds, the lightnings, the sun, moon, and stars—as his far-away ancestors did, he is either conquering or taming them so that they do his will and subserve his interests. Neither is he like Mazeppa, lashed to

the wild horse of passion, unless he has criminally brought degradation upon himself. Such cases there may be, but the wretched victims are thus bound as the result or in consequence of long indulgence in sinful passions. At the commencement of their wrong-doing they were masters of the situation. The intoxicating cup they could have dashed to the ground and lived lives of sobriety, and they knew it. The sickly sentimentalism which exists in many places for the vile—for murderers, anarchists, bank robbers, etc.—has in society the force of a moral pestilence. In whatever character such sympathy exists, it is moral rottenness. Nothing should be said or done to remove from the mind of the evil-doer the terrible truth that his crimes are his own, and that he must endure the miseries they inflict. Strip what are known as the crimes of murder, perjury, and theft of their moral character—call them social or business misfortunes, then wreath the brow of the “unfortunate” with laurels, and pour into his soul a flood of sympathy—and soon earth will become a pandemonium. On the other hand, a sound philosophy finds a true expression in Scripture language: “What is man that thou art mindful of him? Thou hast made him but a little lower than the angels, and crowned him with glory and honor, and given him dominion over the works of thy hands.” This is what we find the full-orbed

man to be. His character was rooted in a consciousness that, whatever his virtues or vices might be, they would be his own—the make-up of his being, the form his individuality would take on—and his life has been consecrated to virtuous and noble well-doing.

CHAPTER XIX.

INFIDELITY AS THE OUTCOME OF THE PERVERSIONS
AND MISINTERPRETATIONS OF SCRIPTURE.

“WHO has this Book and reads it not,
Doth God himself despise;
Who reads but understandeth not,
His soul in darkness lies;
Who understands and savors not,
He finds no rest in trouble;
Who savors but obeyeth not,
He hath his judgment double.
Who reads this Book, who understands,
Doth savor and obey;
His soul shall stand at God's right hand
In the great Judgment-day.”

§ I. THEY BEST UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE WHO LIVE
THE LIFE IT DESCRIBES.

As we have seen at every step in this discussion, modern Atheism has but a remote connection with the sacred Scriptures; and whenever they are referred to, both the letter and spirit of their teachings are largely interpreted by the woeful misreadings which have been given to nature. It is admitted that, in many respects, between the doctrines of the Bible and laws of nature, an analogy, harmony, or identity exists, and that both afford the same reasons for believing or denying that the world has a Creator and Governor. The unnatural and strained construction infidels put upon

the Scriptures would be instantly repudiated by Jew and Christian, Catholic and Protestant.

Were these perverted notions the result of calm but insufficient investigation, we might look for a correction of the more fatal mistakes; but in the main the tone and spirit of Atheistic writings afford proof that the authors have been swept by passion from all debatable ground, into the region of scorn and invective; consequently there is but little room, except in rare cases, to hope for a change.

Though this is a superficial, it is a reading, age; and papers, books, and pamphlets are flying in all directions, like the leaves of autumn. We may then, for the special benefit of the youth of our country, glance at the construction skeptics put upon some parts of Scripture, and contrast such perversions with the generally received opinion of the Church.

Whoever looks at the Christian life as detailed in the Bible and illustrated by the lives of thousands and hundreds of thousands, living and dead, can not but admit that there is in it much that is peculiar; and these facts—these realities of human experience—are the best aids one can have to an exposition of the Scriptures. Life in the camp or on the ocean can be understood only by the individual who has endured the march or battled with the waves. Any form or modification of life must be lived to be understood from a mere description given of it.

§ 2. THE IGNORANCE AND BAD CONDUCT OF MEN,
INFIDELS SUBSTITUTE FOR CHRISTIANITY.

The following is a fair sample: "If one wishes to know the worst that man has done—all that power, guided by cruelty, could do; all the excuses that can be framed for the commission of crime; the infinite difference that can exist between that which is professed and that which is practiced; the marvelous malignity of meekness, the arrogance of humility, and the savagery of what is known as universal love—let him read the history of the Christian Church." (Ingersoll's Letter to Gladstone.)

This array of the bad conduct of men amounts to nothing, as argument, unless it can be shown that they acted in accordance with the requirements and the spirit of Christianity. The essence of religion is love—the obedience of supreme love to God and the service of love to man. Systems of theology and ecclesiastical organizations are largely human structures, and the imperfections which they contain, or the ignorance and depravities which remain in the world in spite of Christianity, ought not to be set down to the discredit of religion. The treachery of Judas was a disgrace to humanity, but not to Christ. The genuineness and purity of the Christian religion has not been touched by the unwise conduct of its professed friends. The Spanish Inquisition, though it has ceased to exist as a fact, will re-

main in the form of a monumental disgrace to that nation to the end of time; and all the deeper will the disgrace be because its record of crime was made in the name of religion. Counterfeit gold does not affect the genuineness or the value of the real article. Does not the skeptic try to perpetrate a fraud in bringing forward the bad conduct of ignorant men, and in urging it as an expression of the true character of religion? In his *exposition* of religion we do not see religion, but *men* who greatly needed its saving power. Again,

§3. FAITH, THE ROOT PRINCIPLE OF RELIGION,
THEY REPRESENT AS THE CAUSE OF PERSECUTION.

“In Christianity you will find the cause of persecution. The idea that belief is essential to salvation—this ignorant and merciless dogma—accounts for the atrocities of the Church. This absurd declaration built the dungeons, used the instruments of torture, erected the scaffolds, and lighted the fagots of a thousand years.” (Letter to Gladstone.)

We deny the truth of every allegation in the above sentence. Did the Founder of religion ever lend the slightest countenance to persecution? Can there be persecution except in the absence of sympathy, kindness, and charity? Faith is really the root of every virtue. What is salvation

but a proper relationship between the Creator and creature? How can this *be*, in the absence of faith? Could there be happiness in the family, or any joy in social life, if suspicion prevailed between the parties concerned? The primal and the deepest curse of humanity comes from its proneness to disbelieve in God, resulting in alienation from him. It is by the action of faith that a spirituality of character is developed in human life which constitutes its only possible *capacity* and "*meetness* for the inheritance of the saints in light."

In denouncing faith as he does, Ingersoll betrays his utter ignorance of the first principles of both psychology and Christianity. Mental philosophy as well as Christian experience unite in teaching that, without faith, not a step can be taken in either social, business, or religious life. Faith *is* salvation; heaven is the home of the saved. In Hebrews we have a long catalogue of the achievements of faith, but persecution is not mentioned among them. "Our weapons are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of the strongholds," said Paul. All gospel victories are the victories of faith, not force. Everything in both the letter and the spirit of Christianity is averse to persecution. It was Antichrist and a want of faith that built the dungeons and lit the fagots, and no one knows it better than this perverter of the right ways of the Lord.

§ 4. IN THE ABSENCE OF ARGUMENT, RELIGION IS
CARICATURED.

Though in the following there is not expressed one purely religious thought, Ingersoll makes a clear exposure of himself:

"Is heaven only a well-conducted poor-house? Are the angels in their highest estate nothing but paupers? Must all the redeemed feel that they are in heaven simply because there was a miscarriage of justice? Will the lost be the only ones who will know that the right thing has been done? And will they alone appreciate the ethical elements of religion?"

Has Colonel Ingersoll before him the Veda, the Zend Avesta, the Koran, the Book of Mormon, or what form of religion was it that he was holding up to ridicule? It is not for us to examine such nonsense. We presume his rantings are a fine expression of his conceptions of Christianity; and if so, he is as ignorant of the teachings of the Bible as of the laws of nature. We will say to him that in the scheme of salvation by faith, law and justice are quite as conspicuous as mercy. Since Christ, in harmony with a law of the universe, gave himself for us, God can be just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth; and the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the man who walks according to the Spirit, and not after the flesh. Religion places man on the high

plane of spirituality—a plane of being the skeptic knows nothing of.

“The Church has always despised the man of humor, hated laughter, and encouraged the lethargy of solemnity.”

It is true that low, corrupting, bacchanalian revelry the Church has opposed, and in so doing it has labored for the elevation of humanity; but there is not one element of Christianity that stands out more conspicuously than the gladness and joy of the Christian life. “Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion; for lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord.”

§ 5. THE WARNINGS GIVEN TO THE JEWS OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF IDOLATRY ARE REPRESENTED AS CAUSELESS CRUELITIES.

In the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy the Jews are warned of the calamities which would come upon them as a nation, in case of disobedience and the indulgence of corrupt, heathenish practices. After quoting these passages, Ingersoll says:

“Should it be found that these curses were, in fact, uttered by the god of hell, and that the translators had made a mistake in attributing them to Jehovah, could you say that the sentiments expressed are inconsistent with the supposed character of the infinite fiend?” (Letter to Gladstone.)

His conception of the case before us is this: The God of the Bible, as a matter of self-indulgence, declares that he will pour the fury of his anger upon the Jewish nation, which, at all times, be their conduct what it might, would be deserving of the most tender considerations. Our conception is as follows: Knowing the proneness of this people to depart from his law and plunge into idolatry and every species of self-destructive corruption and crime, he beforehand warns them of their danger, and tells them of the inevitable and terrible consequences that will follow transgression. To increase the pungency of this warning, God represents himself as the active agent who, after every mercy had been exhausted, would bring these things to pass. These laws were, however, elements in the constitution of nature, and the curses and punishments threatened were but the inevitable consequences of crime. God never manifested a purer love or a higher regard for his people than when, by these terrible threatenings, he tried to save them from self-destruction. Their fate was committed to their own hands. Ingersoll's conception of the case utterly excludes the truth it contains, and substitutes a monstrous fiction.

§ 6. IN ITS ATTEMPTS TO PERVERT THE SCRIPTURES,
INFIDELITY MAKES ITSELF SILLY.

Ingersoll lets himself down as follows: "Does not a gradual improvement in the things cre-

ated show a corresponding improvement in the creator?"

Had this question been asked four thousand years ago by a Hindu Pagan, we should not be surprised to meet it; but the fact is, as we have noticed a score of times, Ingersoll's conceptions of God, and nature, and religion are those of a Pagan. A teacher of an infant class in a Sunday-school would smile to hear such a question, even from the least of her pupils, and afterwards be likely to repeat it as a specimen of the merriment of the class-room.

But in this rare case the colonel has dropped invective, and is really trying to reason. God first created the grasses; then higher forms of vegetation; then insects, worms, fishes, reptiles, birds, and beasts; and because the horse is, as an animal, superior to the hippopotamus, his lame and limping logic infers that there must have been a corresponding growth and improvement in the Creator. He is unable to perceive that the creation of the lowest form of vegetable or animal life affords as clear and positive proof of infinite wisdom and power as the highest. Let him try his skill at spinning a hair or organizing a mustard-seed, and if he is capable of grasping the idea of a Supreme Creator, he will feel the necessity of invoking his help. Ingersoll would do better to stick more closely to the Scriptures; for he appears less ridiculous in his perversions of them than of nature.

§ 7. THE REAL QUESTIONS EMBRACED IN CHRISTIANITY ARE OFTEN MISAPPREHENDED.

In the following quotation Ingersoll confounds accepting a fact with fully understanding *what* the fact contains. He says:

"There can be no evidence to any mind of the existence of such a being [as God], and my mind is so that it is incapable of even thinking of an infinite personality."

I can think of an atom as a fact, as a substance, as a reality; and, further, that a stone or an anvil is an aggregation of such atoms, but I have no idea of the essence or shape or properties of the individual atom. An infinite personality can not be more indefinite to the mind than the atom. I hold that man is an intelligence—a mind—and I can think of an infinite personality as clearly and definitely as I can think of a finite personality. I hope that Colonel Ingersoll will not press this point; for I fear that, to bring himself fully within the range of his mind so as to be understood, it would be necessary for God to undeify himself. It is a great blessing to be able to understand the *fact* that God is; and to comprehend all that is embraced in that fact is really not desirable. It is because of his imperfect or vicious psychology that the idea of God is to Ingersoll as colors are to a blind man or music to the deaf. Finite is as far beyond human comprehension as infinite.

§ 8. A FALSE PHILOSOPHY IS SURE TO PERVERT
RELIGIOUS TRUTH.

The following from Ingersoll is a conspicuous example: "Why should the Infinite demand a sacrifice from man? In the first place, the Infinite is conditionless; the Infinite can not want; the Infinite has. A conditioned being may want, but the gratification of a want involves change—a change of condition. If God be conditionless, he can have no wants; consequently, no human being can gratify the Infinite."

On the above metaphysical masquerading we remark:

1. It is a bungling attempt to press into the service of Atheism Sir William Hamilton's speculations on the "unconditioned"—the only truly weak and useless performance of his life.

2. It is intended to undermine the atonement, to nullify all the services of religion, and to abolish the Sabbath.

3. It is a complete misapprehension of the letter and spirit of religion in the following particulars:

(1) It represents God as selfishly wanting something for his personal gratification, whereas the Bible teaches an exactly contrary doctrine.

(2) The sacrifice of Christ was not intended to affect God, to make him propitious, but the creature redeemed and the moral government under which he was to live.

(3) Religious services are instituted for the good of the creature, that in worship he may be changed from glory to glory by the Spirit into the image of God.

§9. THE FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENT OF RELIGION, THAT CHARACTER IS THE ROOT OF HAPPINESS AND MISERY, THE INFIDEL CAN NOT DENY.

Afloat in floods of nonsense we find the following gem from Ingersoll: "Right and wrong exist *in the nature* of things. . . . From certain acts flow certain consequences; the consequences increase or decrease the happiness of man, and the consequences *must be borne*." (Letter to Dr. Field.)

This is good Scripture doctrine; and if the skeptic were capable of seeing its logical bearing he would, at a glance, understand how it pulverizes his infidelity. There is not a deeper, a broader, or a more conspicuous truth in religion than this. It signifies that as a man sows, so shall he reap; that he shall eat of the fruit of his own doings; that he shall be paid the wages for which he works, whether of sin unto death, or of the Spirit unto eternal life. The "consequences" of ill-doing are nothing more nor less than the execution of the divine law against the evil-doer. What in philosophy we call consequences, in theology takes the name of punishment or reward; and, in both cases alike, it is an expression of the will of God. Suffering for sin, considered as conse-

quences, presents punishment in its most terrible aspect. As a man looks upon himself as a doomed sufferer, and surveys the cause, no keener pain can pierce his heart than comes from these words: *This is my own work*. A man may defy the Almighty, but he can not fight himself. "The consequences must be borne"—terrible words.

§ 10. INFIDELITY UTTERLY FAILS TO GRASP THE
HIGHER ELEMENTS OF THE MIND.

Its highest aspirations are limited to the indulgences this world and this life afford. It shuts out wholly the domain of the spiritual. High principles of patriotism, love of the truth for the truth's sake, and an unselfish devotion to the interest of others can not live in its atmosphere. Ingersoll says: "There are two things which can not exist in the same universe, an Infinite God and a martyr." (Rome or Reason?)

Ingersoll strikes here at the root of religion. Men are prone to become creatures of passion, appetite, and self-indulgence. This might do if man were but a first-class brute, and this life were all; but Christianity recognizes a future state of existence as the continuation of this—once I was not, I am, and it is more likely that I shall continue to exist, now that I am, than that I should be, when I was not. The Bible doctrine of immortality thus carries presumption of its truth on its face.

This life, then, with its trade and business and

indulgences, is not the whole or the highest interest that should engage the attention of an Intelligence who *expects* to exist forever. Bread and meat for the body are valuable ; but where a soul is recognized, has it not high and holy demands which should be respected ? If truth and principle and duty are more valuable to a man than this life and this world, it is not because these are prized too little, but because those are placed at their true value. The martyr becomes a martyr because he can not part with the measure of his immortality, which has already commenced. God did not interfere and shield Stephen from the pelting stones of his murderers, but he opened heaven to his gaze, and his countenance became radiant because of the immortal fires burning within. Did God deal harshly with him ? The moral power which makes a martyr possible, is a prophecy of an immortal crown. Is it because the infidel himself is in the dirt that he hates—yes, detests—everything of the nature of spiritual elevation ?

CHAPTER XX.

THE IDENTITY OF NATURAL AND REVEALED RELIGION.

BEFORE dealing with any part of theology which is peculiarly Christian, we must trace the connection between the Reign of Law and the ideas which are alike fundamental to all religions and inseparable from the facts of nature.

—ARGYLL.

§ I. NATURE AND THE BIBLE AS DIFFERENT WITNESSES.

In searching for the identity of the lessons taught by nature and the Bible, it must not be supposed that the one is a duplicate of the other, but rather that there is a narrow border-land which is touched by both realms of truth, and it is only here that importance is to be attached to the agreement of the testimony of the two witnesses.

Man, as a part of nature, belongs also to the religious world, and serves as a connecting link between them. His physical and vital nature identifies him as belonging to the organic world, whereas his intellectual and spiritual being place him in the higher religious sphere. As we penetrate the realm which lies below man, the distinctive elements of religion disappear; and the higher we rise in the scale of intelligence and spiritual-

ity, the stronger and more intense they become. We should, then, principally look for the unity and identity of religion and nature along the line of humanity wherein it touches both worlds, and in other respects remain indifferent to the teachings of nature so far as religion is concerned.

§ 2. THE USE AS A TEACHER CHRIST MADE OF NATURE.

In consequence of the close relationship which exists, of one kind and another, between nature and religion, the one may be used as a great help to a better understanding of the other. Christ, the great Teacher, not only recognized this fact, but he made it very conspicuous in many of his discourses. Passing a vineyard in company with his disciples, its fruitfulness suggested to him the nature of his kingdom. In the vine he could see himself, and in the branches his disciples. As the branches come out of the vine, derive nourishment from it, and are thus made fruitful, so Christ is to his disciples the source of spiritual life, and separate from him they can do nothing. Here nature and religion alike teach and illustrate the law of man's dependence upon God. Here also we may see the analogy of nature and religion, and the identity of the instruction given. It was easy for Christ to perceive, in the process of making bread, the vital and moral elements of the kingdom of heaven. As in the living yeast-germs there is a power to transform the meal into apparently a

new substance adapted to the oven, and ultimately to the wants of the stomach, so the gospel, attended by the infinite *quickenings* Spirit of grace, regenerates and transforms the nature of man into the divine image, and "makes him meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." In their *processes* we see, in this case, the analogy of nature and religion, and *identity* in the lessons taught. As bread is the result of the presence of the foreign substance, yeast in the flour, so religion is the gift of the infinite, life-giving Spirit. Natural law in the yeast has no kinship with spiritual law in the Gospel, but the analogy of their *results* is spiritually instructive. The wise virgins, who took a supply of oil in their vessels as they went out to meet the bridegroom, practiced a far-reaching *prudence* in providing for future contingencies, which has its analogy in the religious life, and is of a higher significance. Christ saw in the barren fig-tree the possibility and the consequences of practical carelessness in regard to a knowledge of God and a preparation for eternity. The sower, the seed, the different kinds of ground on which the seed may fall, and the various results which may follow, have their analogies—analogies full of instruction—in the kingdom of Christ. The natural law of vegetable life, which controls in the seed, is utterly unlike the spiritual law, which controls in the word of the kingdom; and yet the working of the natural law is so analagous to the working of the spiritual

law that they teach the same lesson. The servant who buried his talent in the earth, and, as a consequence, earned nothing, represents a very common character—the one whose religious *capacity is not developed*—often designated and deprecated in the Gospel. If man's spiritual nature, as the connecting link between nature and religion, is deficient in its development, we must regard him as being, on the whole, a failure. If, on the side of nature, man's intellect is not developed, we shall perceive that in his idiocy the deficiency is terrible; but if, on the religious side, there has not been a development of the spiritual element, the failure is still greater. In other words, the "natural man" as a *man*, his *eternal* relations considered, is as much below the "spiritual man" as the servant who had buried his talent was below the servant who had earned five talents in addition to the five which had been intrusted to him. From humanity as from a single root, both nature and the Bible teach that there may spring morally two orders of being of widely divergent characters and opposite destiny; and in proof and illustration of this statement, we may appeal to the most conspicuous personages of the world's history—Paul, Nero; Wesley, Voltaire.

We are strongly inclined to the opinion that had not sin, with its consequences—spiritual death—entered the world, the revelations of the Bible would have been unnecessary. In that case, so free and untrammelled would have been

man's intellectual powers, so keen and sensitive his moral being, so quick and imperious his conscience, and so active his spiritual perceptions, that without such help he would have comprehended himself, adjusted his relations to his fellow-beings, served his Creator, and ever been ready for eternity.

§ 3. THE VALIDITY OF THIS REASONING ADMITTED BY THE SKEPTIC.

The principle of the argument we have endeavored to elaborate is recognized by Colonel Ingersoll in a letter to Dr. Field. He inquires:

"What right have you to occupy the position of the Deist, and put forth arguments that even Christians have answered? They denounced the God of the Bible, because of his cruelty, and at the same time lauded the God of nature. The Christian replied that the God of nature was as cruel as the God of the Bible. *This answer was complete.*"

The *admitted identity* of instruction found in nature and in the Bible is the important point before us; but we deny that either teaches that God is cruel. We can form no higher conceptions of truth, goodness, patience, and love than such as are revealed to us in connection with the divine character, but his goodness is equaled by his justice and holiness; and both nature and the Bible teach that this is a moral world; that moral actions, good and bad, originate in the will of man;

that he alone is responsible for the existence of such acts, and for all their consequences; that out of the character thus formed, if good, the best results—happiness in this world and heaven in the next—will flow; and if bad, the outcome must *necessarily* be bitterness and sorrow and woe. It is, then, false and unjust to ascribe the sufferings our race has endured, all of which are directly or indirectly the consequences of sin, to the cruelties of either the God of nature or of the Bible. Out of a life of right thinking and doing, the good have found their supreme blessedness; and the profligate have made themselves wretched, because necessity was laid upon them by the unchangeable moral constitution of nature, “to eat of the fruit of *their own* doings.” The doctrine that as a man sows so shall he reap, is taught by both Scripture and nature; and as wages or pay, it is not possible for sin to award its servants anything but misery and death, for such are its only possessions.

§ 4. NATURE CONSIDERED AS A REVELATION.

Religion should not be thought of as an evolution from nature, nor should nature be regarded as an evolution from religion, but each has an isolated and independent root of its own in the same Divine Creator; each has a character of its own, and is governed by laws which are an expression of that character. These laws form parallel lines, which, though they meet and coalesce here and there, never *cross* each other. As

matter and organic life can not become either mind or spirit, so there can be no transfer of the laws of one kingdom to the other. The hypothesis that natural law can control in the spiritual world, implies either that matter is spirit, or that spirit is material; and the absurdity of either supposition can not be easily surpassed. A clear and undoubted fact of nature—as, that bread is nourishing—should be regarded as the voice of God on that subject and an expression of his will. Every such fact of the universe should be accepted in the same manner, and revered as a revelation. As nature reveals to us, both through our experience and observation of the experience of others, the bitterness of sin and the blessedness of purity, that fact, independent of the Bible, should be regarded as an element in the constitution of nature and as a revelation from God.

That it was so regarded by the men of ancient Greece and Rome, learned and unlearned, is evident from the fact that this idea or conscience, by an apotheosis, was elevated to a place among the gods, and known as Nemesis. Whoever the guilty party, high or low, or wherever he was, or what his employment, the burning eye of Nemesis—the god of vengeance—was on him. It was to appease this god that Jonah was thrown overboard into the sea; and when the people of the island of Melita saw the viper on the hand of the shipwrecked Paul, they reasoned that Nemesis was pursuing him as a criminal, who had escaped the violence

of the storm. Every age, every nation, and every human heart has its Nemesis, which *is the one God*, speaking through nature, proclaiming the exceeding bitterness and the terrible deserts of sin. When, anciently, complaint was made that the god of vengeance moved tardily, or tarried by the way, one of the poets apologized for him as follows: "The mills of the gods grind slowly, but, then, they *grind very fine*."

§ 5. THE TESTIMONY OF THE TWO WITNESSES IMPORTANT ONLY WHEN THEY TOUCH THE SAME SUBJECT.

The line of thought, here barely suggested, covers the larger part of human history, and holds as conspicuous a place in the Bible as it does in nature. *In every particular, where the two witnesses touch the same point, their testimony is the same.* Misery is not, therefore, the result of the cruelty of the God of nature or of the Bible, but it comes upon man as the result of the violation of the laws of his being and of the universe, of which he forms a part. Instead of living in harmony with his environments, man is out of his sphere, his nature is perverted, and he is in collision with his best interests. This is the testimony of both nature and the Bible. Both witnesses alike profess kindness, and the infidelity which rests upon the affirmation of cruelty is without any foundation in truth. Between the structure of a clock, or a watch, and an hour-glass, there may be many and

wide differences, but for such difference we care nothing. The only question of importance is this: Do they agree in marking time correctly? And *such* is the nature of the relation which the different witnesses for religion sustain to each other. Any one who is disposed to reject *willfully* the force of their agreement can do so; but such persons as are loyal to fact and logic will find some very grave obstructions before them, if they anticipate finding rest in infidelity as a form of spite.

As we believe that nature is real and the Bible true, we do not hesitate to subject religion to the test of their agreement in regard to all of its fundamental elements. If both teach the same lesson in regard to the reality of a moral world, the free agency of man, the reign of law in both the spiritual and natural world, that happiness and woe are both the outcome of character, and that man is the author of his own destiny, then their agreement is complete.

In this connection it should be borne in mind that law is as thoroughly an element of religion as of physical nature. Whatever exists possesses a nature of its own, and out of that nature springs the law by which it is governed; hence, as things differ *per se*, so they differ in the law of their phenomenal action. In its behavior a flower differs from a stone because it is a vital organism, and its life is subject to the action of the laws of its own nature; the behavior of a bird differs from that of a flower because its life is of another kind,

of a higher order, and subject to a higher law. Now, as the nature or essence of things can not be changed, the stone can not be transmuted into the flower, nor the flower into the bird, it follows that law can not be transferred from one department of the universe to another. Material law can not act apart from matter, vital law is limited to the substance in which it originates, and spiritual law can hold sway only in the spiritual world. This interpretation of law we may find not only in the Bible, but we may read it upon every page of the volume of nature.

§ 6. NATURE'S TESTIMONY MORE THAN ITS ANALOGY TO RELIGION.

Bishop Butler's Analogy of Nature and Religion revolutionized the thought of the age in which he lived, and his argument still remains as one of the permanent defenses of Christianity. No one, however, ever saw more clearly than Butler the limits and inconclusiveness of this argument. It barely raises such a presumption in favor of revealed religion that the Deist could not reasonably pass it by without first giving it the most serious attention; and this is all that was claimed for it by its great author. Drummond, we think, is wholly wrong, and brings the greatest confusion into the field of thought in identifying as *one* natural and spiritual law. Discarding Drummond in this crucial part of his argument, we retain the argument from analogy for all it is

worth, and add thereto the positive and united testimony of nature and the Bible to the fundamental elements of religion. The Bible has been allowed to speak in its own right, as if it were the sole witness in the case, and to nature has been awarded the same privilege. The only direction given them or restriction put upon them was to confine their testimony to God and man, and especially to the nature and destiny of man. As for unity, or harmony, or resemblance between the witnesses themselves, we have been indifferent; indeed, the more fully they appeared to be unlike each other, strangers and independent, the more forcible was the agreement of their testimony. In this respect the facts in the case give to the argument all the cogency and conclusiveness we could desire.

The infidel may step in between the Bible and nature along lines where they do not pretend to touch or approach each other, and proclaim a want of harmony; but the case he makes is wholly irrelevant, and affords him no ground for his skepticism. Because science tells us the number of bones there are in the human body, and the Bible is silent on the subject, there is no collision of testimony; and because the Bible says God is a Spirit, and nature gives no voice in regard to the essence of its creator, neither witness is to be discredited on these accounts.

It is thus made to appear that nature and the Bible have a common source and the same origin.

The Being who gave existence to man, and made him a part of the constitution of nature, adjusted his relation to the sun and moon and stars, made the earth, the air, and the waters of the globe subservient to his comfort; and in another way he has shown the same hand, the same will, and the same wisdom; namely, in the revelation we have contained in words. If in either place there are to be seen the foot-prints of divinity, there are in both. The streams are two, and wholly unlike each other; but as they have back of them a common source of supply, their waters are the same. Not a fig-leaf can the infidel find here to hide his shame.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE AGREEMENT OF NATURE AND REVELATION AS
WITNESSES TO THE SAME TRUTH.

IF the God of love is most appropriately worshiped in the Christian temple, the God of nature may be equally honored in the temple of science. Even from its lofty minarets the philosopher may summon the faithful to prayer, and the priest and the sage exchange altars without a compromise of faith or knowledge.—SIR DAVID BREWSTER.

§ I. A LAMENT FOR THE FATE OF THE SKEPTIC.

All the fundamental elements of infidelity which are regarded as important have now been examined; and what has been found? Narrow and obsolete notions of philosophy and distorted conceptions of nature. Ingersoll's criticisms of the Old Testament, and especially his caricature called the "Mistakes of Moses," considered as a part of the great debate, are of but little importance.

We can not withhold from this gifted man our sorrowful sympathy, when we call to mind the fact that he was driven by an unfortunate education, a mistaken theology, and a false philosophy into the terrible vortex of fatalism; or, to use his own expressive language, "lashed, like Prometheus, to the rocks of fate." One of two interpretations of the universe he found himself compelled to adopt,—either hold that nature was a thing of

chance, governed by chance laws, or that the God he had been taught to believe in was the only energy in the universe; that he was the cause of all things, and especially of the crimes, calamities, and miseries of human life. The actual sufferings of the world touched his sympathies; his vivid imagination gave to every tear and groan the highest possible coloring; and then he never failed to connect, as instructed by his theology and philosophy, everything that was vile and mean with God, as its author. His mind, harboring such convictions, and long kept in such a state of tumult, finally grew to regard it as an insult to be asked to believe that the God who took pleasure in producing crimes and sufferings could, at the same time, be almighty, infinitely wise, and divinely good. This is the rock on which he split. With his narrow views of nature, and his unfortunate religious training, he felt himself compelled to hold to the existence of such a God, or become an Atheist, and surrender the universe to the blind, imperfect, but certain decrees of fate. Did not his decision involve the least moral outrage his premises admitted? And should we not moderate our censures of the infidel till we have removed the ground on which his infidelity is based? How could the most devout Christian, if given to thought, and in the least degree loyal to logic, avoid following his example, if compelled to adopt his principles? How can any one who feels that God has made him to be the victim of

sin and misery, at the same time become his devout, spiritual worshiper? John, as a psychologist, said: "We love him because he first loved us, and became the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." Any reading of nature, any philosophy, or any interpretation of the Bible, which in any way, directly or indirectly, makes God the author of sin, on the instant undeifies him; and, to be reasonable, we must pronounce the doctrine false, or take the plunge into Atheism.

§ 2. RELIGION CAN BE UNDERSTOOD ONLY AS WE GIVE
TO NATURE AND THE BIBLE THE BROADEST
INTERPRETATIONS.

In our search for the scientific elements which are supposed to lie at the foundation of infidelity, we have been led along various paths of nature, and have questioned everything that came in our way, from the atoms to the stars, which we had reason to think would afford it the least support; but at every step we have found that the broader and the more minute our conceptions of the universe became, the more completely infidelity, like a dream, has dissolved, and the more fully and conspicuously religion, as a great light, has appeared in the moral heavens. In fact, it seems that the moral element is the great central fact of creation, and that it unifies and gives value to all the rest.

We have followed Ingersoll along his tortuous,

philosophical, and theological ways into the dark realm of necessity, we have looked at this Prometheus as he was lashed to the rocks of fate, and, turning from him, have found in a simple and clearly-defined psychology the freedom and the consequent responsibility of the human mind. We have discovered that the will originates the act which contains the peculiar quality known as *moral*, whether good or bad, and hence virtues and crimes are human, and they have not God as their author.

Out of this doctrine emerges the conclusion that the character, which had its origin and growth in the determinations of the will, lies at the base and is the cause of man's self-made destiny. If the character thus formed be good, it will be so very great and prolific in its goodness that its honor, glory, wisdom, and felicity will be commensurate with the creature's capacity. If the character formed by the vicious determinations of the will be carried into eternity, then there will be, (1) the absence of a rich outflow from virtue; (2) the sufferings which are the natural and inevitable outcome of the moral vacuum in the soul, supplied by elements of depravity.

The force of this argument can be seen only as we properly weigh the greatness and the force of character. If in the acorn there is a potency which produces the mighty oak, is it possible for the mind to conceive what the fruits of a human character may be, with an eternity before it for development?

The effusions of the poet, the argument of the logician, the melody of the musician, and the remorse of the criminal, as mental phenomena, are true expressions of the minds from which they spring. Euclid, Kant, and Byron could not have done each the other's work. We have here a principle which is universal in nature—the outcome of things, whatever that may be, is a true expression of their nature; and nowhere is the principle more imperious in its application than on the high plane of an ever-growing moral nature. Our eternity, then, good or bad, must fundamentally be the outcome of the being we carry there. Our character is our own, for we have made it; it is ourselves, for we have no other individuality; and ourselves we must for ever remain. Hence, to charge the sins and consequent miseries of man upon God is unjust, an outrage on truth, and blasphemous. It is not, therefore, necessary to flee for refuge to Atheism to get rid of the horrible dogma of a sin-stained God.

§ 3. THE HARMONY OF NATURE AND REVELATION
IN THE TESTIMONY THEY GIVE IN REGARD TO
THE NATURE AND DESTINY OF MAN.

We now regard the Atheist as disposed of, and the question which next in logical order may receive attention refers to the identity of the God of nature and of revelation. Can we find the same ideas, purposes, and other marks of a common authorship, in the one that we find in the other?

Between the two schemes of thought and purpose, can we detect a common bond of sympathy? Especially, is the God who is revealed to us in nature the same Being, in all his essential attributes, that we meet with in revelation? Is the man of our consciousness and experience the same man that we meet with in both revelation and nature? The answers, which the facts of the case may compel us to give to these questions, ought to go a great way towards putting an end to the whole controversy.

It will not be expected that, in form or in scope, there will be any similarity between nature and revelation; nor is that fact a matter of any importance, as all interest centers in the identity of the lessons taught in regard to the relations which subsist between God and man.

As now, in every essential particular, we are to take our stand upon the high plane of intelligence and moral character, man, a created being, must be regarded as a part of nature, and as the center of interest in this discussion.

We may consider nature, in vastness, as infinite; and yet we are not at present interested in any of its details, except such as touch the realm occupied by revelation. We must also bear in mind that revelation occupies a field which is almost exclusively its own, and only where it borders upon nature are we interested in the relation the two realms sustain to each other. Where they touch, there should be unity in the lessons taught;

where they do not touch, each is supreme and independent in its own way and its own sphere.

Nature and revelation meet in God and man, as on common ground, and the question before us is: Are their teachings the same in regard to them? If we find that such is the case, it will follow, with the force of a demonstration, that the two harmonious lines of thought have a common origin. The Author of the one must be the Author of the other. If so, then, in the structure of the argument it will appear that the teachings of the Bible, either as inspiration or as a copy from nature, must be divine.

§4. THE CONSTITUTION OF NATURE EMBODIES IN ITSELF THE WISDOM AND THE POWER AND THE BENEVOLENCE OF GOD, WHICH AFTERWARDS, IN ANOTHER FORM, FOUND EXPRESSION IN THE WRITTEN WORD.

Whether inspired or not, the Bible does not pretend to be a creator of truth, but a revealer of facts and truths and principles which already existed. Nature is older than the Bible, and if the fundamental truths of revelation and nature are the same, touching God and man, then the written truth has been copied out of the volume of nature by the Holy Spirit, for there it was first put on record by the same Spirit.

Let me remind the reader again that all there is of man—man being the main thread in this line of thought—as a part of creation, is also a

part of nature, and an expression *of nature* in regard to the divine will. The topic before us may then take any one or all of these forms:

Is the Bible fundamentally a copy of the facts, principles, and lessons which may also be learned from the parts of nature which border upon the same themes? Or, are the Bible and nature different editions of the same essential truths which relate to God and man? Or, as separate witnesses, do the Bible and nature agree in their testimony in regard to the essential truths of religion? We take our stand on the affirmative of these questions, prepared to try conclusions. Let the two voices now be heard:

Bible. A God exists—almighty, divine in essence, infinite in all his attributes—the Creator of the universe and the Preserver of all things.

Nature. Here I am, an infinite realm, and in every department—from the glow-worm to myriad suns; from the atom to the archangel—I proclaim my maker, God. It is impossible for me to exist and report the deliverances of consciousness, or frame a system of psychology, or even to exercise common sense, without recognizing myself—the mind—as an active intelligence, distinct from the matter and from the life of the body. As I see myself in other men, I can know them and they know me. I am one of a race—a drop in the vast ocean of humanity. The environments of climate, land and sea, food and clothing, peace and war, have their modifying effects upon both mind and

body; but after all, I, the man that was made, still "am."

Bible. Man is a "living soul," or, more properly, a mind or an intelligence, occupying a body, wrought out of the "dust of the ground" by a human life into a marvelously and "fearfully" complicated organism. (We prefer to use the word mind, *because* it embraces the *psyche*, or soul, the lower part of man; and also the *pneuma*, the higher or more spiritual part. The body is "dust"—common dirt—nothing more, nothing less or different; the life, which has built this dirt into an organism, also serves as an intermediary between the organism and the mind, and it is through this life that the mind controls the body. It is wrong to say man *has* a soul or mind or spirit, for the truth is, MAN IS A MIND; and the thing or being or creature, designated by the title MIND, embraces *in itself* all that is signified by the terms soul and spirit. It is well to retain the use of the terms soul and spirit, but the former should never be used in science only to designate man's emotional nature, and the latter his highest—that is, his religious capacity. The title *mind* embraces both extremes of man's being. As the body is no part of the mind, so the *life* of the body is no part of either body or mind. The life of the body may disappear, and the body, as dust, return to the earth as it was, and yet the mind, or the MAN, remain untouched).

Nature. Yes, I think—that is to say, I am—

and I must have been created; for, as I was once nonentity, I did not originate myself. As an intelligence, I am conscious of my existence. I think, I reason, I will, I feel, and I am conscious of such mental acts and of oft repeating them.

The voice of Nature, continuing, says:

Chemistry, my servant, has demonstrated that the body is composed of "dust," as follows: Oxygen, 72 per cent; hydrogen, 9; carbon, 7; nitrogen, 5; and small portions of the following substances: calcium, phosphorus, iron, sodium, chlorine, magnesium, iodine, silicon, and a trace of arsenicum. These are the most common and abundant substances known to us. The body was made of this kind of "dust" or dirt.

Bible. Man's existence, begun in this world, will be perpetuated in another state of existence.

Nature. The idea of annihilation—a something becoming nothing—is unthinkable. No such process is known. Nothing of the kind ever took place, and there is no known agency at work which prophecies that it ever will. The question of an eternal future, among all nations in all ages of human history, has ever been one of absorbing interest; and such is the structure of man that it is impossible for him to think and believe and feel that this life ends all.

Bible. Man's disobedience and crimes brought into the world its miseries and death.

Nature. Human history is made up largely

of suffering, which is the result of wrong-doing by some one, at some time, and of some kind. Ages of experience confirm the doctrine of the mortality of the human body.

Bible. Man was endowed with an intellectual capacity to apprehend the right and the wrong; intellect was re-enforced with a conscience which ever urged him to do the right; and his will was invested with the power to pursue the right and to avoid the wrong; and hence the responsibility of his guilt, and of all the suffering that flows from it, lies at his own door.

Nature. Notwithstanding the measure of ruin sin has wrought in my moral being, consciousness and conscience, two infallible witnesses, testify—and their testimony has been uniform and constant through all the ages of the past—that guiltiness follows voluntary transgression and none other. This doctrine I have proclaimed in the cell, in the prison, on the scaffold, from the jury, on the judge's bench, the death-bed, in all languages, and from every human heart.

Bible. Sin makes man the antagonist of the world he lives in, and, as a matter of fact, his experience must be very bitter.

Nature. Man's actual life is a perpetual commentary on the words "guilt," "condemnation," "sorrow," and "remorse."

Bible. The greatest enemy man has to encounter in this life is death.

Nature. Such has been the experience of all people of all ages.

Bible. Virtue is the only root of true and lasting happiness.

Nature. As light radiates from a burning lamp, so does happiness from a soul of truth, purity, and justice.

Bible. God is angry with the wicked every day.

Nature. The transgressor is conscious that he is under condemnation, and his conscience is a constant accuser.

Bible. The wicked shall not go unpunished.

Nature. The inevitable outcome of a sinful character is misery.

Bible. Forgiveness and peace on certain terms is freely offered to the guilty.

Nature. It is the experience of millions that guilty man may repent, become consciously reconciled to God, and enjoy his favor.

Bible. To the believer a victory is promised over death and the grave.

Nature. The dying Christian shouts: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!"

Bible. The fact and evidence of justification are secured by faith.

Nature. Psychology discloses the fact that the basis of reconciliation with God must be *trust* or *confidence* in him.

Bible. Christ gave himself as a ransom for the sins of the whole world.

Nature. There is nothing in the universe which exists for itself alone without relations. Every atom seems to have been made for some other atom or for the whole universe. Need and supply everywhere go hand in hand.

Bible. Man in this world is in a state of trial. He may pursue the good, or he may yield to temptation and become the victim of the bad; but in either case his conduct here fixes his destiny in the future world.

Nature. On the same principle, in this life the conduct of one period of life is likely to give character, either good or bad, to that which is to follow. As one part of life is to another—youth to manhood—so is the whole of this life to the next.

Bible. In some things God's wisdom is unsearchable, and his ways past finding out. It seems that if the mind could grasp the whole, the meaning of each part could be more distinctly understood; but as the case stands, we must bow our heads in silence in the presence of mysteries.

Nature. The most learned scholars and the profoundest philosophers are compelled to confess that mystery reigns all along all the lines of thought that extend from the atom to the star.

We must close the examination of these witnesses somewhere, and perhaps this will be as

good a place as any. We have passed along the border where the two realms of truth come together and lap upon each other, and find that, in every essential particular, they teach the same doctrines concerning man and his destiny.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE OLD TESTAMENT.

THAT the idea of moral purity in the minds of the Israelites was originated by the machinery of the Levitical dispensation is supported, not only by the philosophy of the thing, but by many allusions of the Scriptures.

—WALKER.

§ I. TO MODERN EYES OBSCURITY RESTS UPON ALL
ANTIQUITY.

It is with but little satisfaction to itself that the mind attempts to catch the spirit of an age long since passed away. After having spent some years in examining the forts, and mounds, and pyramids, and pottery, and stone implements which are found in all parts of this country, we learn, beyond the possibility of doubt, that beneath our feet lies a vast empire that has perished; but the strange ruins give us but the faintest idea of the manners and customs and government which once prevailed among the busy millions of people who have vanished from our sight. Fancy can re-people their forts with armed men; but who were the opposing forces, and for what did they fight? What is the significance of a mound of earth that covers thirteen acres, as in West Virginia, and which was once five hundred feet in height? Is that pile the mausoleum of a

king? Was he a monster, and did his oppressed subjects attempt to bury him so deep that no resurrection power would ever reach him? Or was he great and good, and did each subject he had blessed covet the privilege of casting a handful of earth upon his grave? What signify those vast and costly earth-works in the Northwest, which represent the elephant, the bear, the elk, the eagle, and other birds and beasts? In at least one instance the labor of hundreds of men—probably thousands, as the use of iron was unknown—was for some months expended in the construction of a serpent, with open mouth, in the act of swallowing a ball, some six feet in diameter. What do these things signify? By what motives were their builders actuated? What were they to themselves, and what was the world to them? What were their ideas of life and of destiny? As human beings they must have thought, and loved, and hated; and is not that about all we know of them?

Could some millions of these ancient mound-builders revisit their earthly home in Ohio and Indiana, they might recognize the rivers, the natural scenery, and their perishing earth-works; but how little would they be able to comprehend of the spirit of the age in which *we* live! We now know as little of the structure of their society—of their thoughts, their longings and sorrows—as they would know of ours.

Would it be possible for any nation in this age

to duplicate the pyramid Cheops? There are laborers and money enough, the rocky ledges of every country could supply the necessary stone, but the key-note of humanity, that which inspired and directed all such enterprises, has had its day—died out and departed from the earth. It is impossible for us to think the thoughts or feel the ambition which gave birth to the marvelous works of ancient Egypt. So much of human life has ceased to exist, and only its lettered but undecipherable monuments remain. What is true in regard to Cheops might, with but slight modification, be applied to the whole civilization of that age and country. What we know even of the Colonial history of our country—its mental and heart history, the most important part of history—is but a fragment rescued from oblivion; and much more does obscurity and total darkness hide from our view the original impulse which gave character to all forms of ancient civilization. We are not able even to catch a glimpse of the spirit of the people which made it possible for the pyramids, the sphinx, the labyrinth, the needles, and the obelisks of Egypt to be built. We can not see how Cheops could ever have been worth to the nation the twelve acres of ground it stands on. Modern times have labored hard, and given the widest range to a creative fancy, in attempts to read a vast deal of significance into that structure, but, after all, the mystery which hangs over it is as dense as ever. The soul-life and

longings of that ancient seat of civilization have really departed from the earth, and all that we of this age can apprehend is scarcely its weird shadow.

In the Temple of the Sun at Baalbec there may now be seen, in defiance of the ravages of time, three nicely cut and fitted stones, upwards of sixty feet in length, and more than sixteen feet square. What kind of a people were they, or what was the spirit of the age in which they lived, that the idea of building of such material should have entered into any human mind? Men like ourselves, no doubt, they were, but they must have been a race of Titans to have had such thoughts and purposes.

§2. NATIONS INCORPORATE THE SPIRIT OF THEIR TIMES IN THEIR WORKS.

It is safe to affirm that the spirit of all nations and peoples of all ages finds an expression in the works they construct when busy actors upon the stage of life. An ancient philosopher said: "Times change, and we change with them." He would have expressed more exactly the truth if he had said: We change, and, as a consequence, the times change also. As a necessity, a people must act out the life they live; and traces of their works the successive generations will leave behind, even if as low down in the scale of civilization as our wild hunter Indians. No nation or people can remain stationary long at a time.

It will either deteriorate or rise in the scale of civilization, and, in either case, the proper evidence of the fact will not be wanting. Here we find in operation the law of growth and development; and the sweep it takes is so wide, and the interests it touches are so numerous, that there is no possibility of deception or fraud.

§ 3. THE ORIGIN OF THE JEWISH NATION ONE OF THE BEST AUTHENTICATED FACTS OF HISTORY.

The place of the Jewish people in human history is shrouded in obscurity, and yet it is more clearly defined and better authenticated than that of any other nation under heaven. If we leave the Bible out of the account, what would we know of the origin of races and of nations? Absolutely nothing. If we question the genuineness of the history we have of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the bondage in Egypt of the Hebrews, Moses, the exodus of this people, and their establishment in the Holy Land, then we must at once discard all ancient history. The nation does not exist which can give us so clear an account of its origin and entire history as the Jews. In its bearing upon the growth and structure of the Old Testament, this is a matter of the very highest importance. The validity of whatever exists in the light of history is subjected to the severest of tests. It is in this focus of light and heat that we find the Bible.

But the very facts which attest the truthful-

ness of the ancient Scriptures are used by infidelity to discredit it. It is alleged that the society it describes and the influences to which it was subject *we* know nothing of.

§ 4. THE CONDITION OF THE HEBREW MIND AT THE TIME OF THE EXODUS.

When the Hebrews left Egypt, after four hundred years of the most bitter servitude, they, as a people, must have been among the most ignorant and degraded of those times. Were it not for the few gleams of light we derive from the Scriptures and Egyptian records, they would present as hazy an appearance in the dim distance as the mound-builders of our own country. What we see the most clearly is their lowly moral condition, and the means adopted by Moses to effect their elevation. If we persist in looking upon this people as we regard present Christian nations, and judge accordingly of the means used for their elevation and government, we shall utterly miss the truth in the case. This is the unpardonable mistake Colonel Ingersoll has made. Moses undertook the moral elevation of a people who could not grasp an abstract moral idea, nor discriminate between their own soul and body. He commenced by teaching them to distinguish a clean from a dirty hand, and then between other clean from unclean things. That this lesson might be kept constantly before their eyes, he divided the beasts and birds and fishes of creation into two classes,

the clean and the unclean. In many ways he brought this principle to bear constantly upon the minds of the men and women of his charge. Uncleaness might result from contact with a dead body and other things. This form of purity was urged—yes, demanded—of the people as a national interest, and of the highest importance; and it followed, as a logical consequence, that to be unclean was to be a wretch, an outcast, scarcely fit to live. This principle, at the very beginning of the nation's existence, became an all-pervading element of its life.

§ 5. THE POLICY PURSUED BY MOSES FOR THE ELEVATION OF THIS PEOPLE.

We flatter ourselves that we can catch a glimmering of the wisdom of this course. To start with, we would not expect a Digger Indian, as a mechanic, to be able even to perceive the beauty of Corinthian architecture, and we should not set him to work at anything of the kind. If he could make a good milking-stool or a hoe-handle, we should think he had done well. Wesley had in mind the Mosaic conception of physical purity when he said, "Cleanliness is next to godliness;" and evidently he thought, with Moses, that it was a stepping-stone to moral purity.

Notwithstanding all the mistakes Ingersoll fancies he has discovered in Moses, there are other men, whom the world regards as competent to judge, who are willing to confess their indebt-

edness to him in a great modern emergency. We refer particularly to the Hon. B. F. Butler. On May 1, 1862, he found himself in New Orleans, in command of a large army, all unacclimated men from the North. Of the history of his occupation of that city he says :

“May 10th, the streets were reeking with putrefying filth, and the smells from the decomposing matter were, to a Northern nose, unbearable. Everything had, of custom, been thrown into the streets that the inhabitants desired to be rid of, and lay there, seething and rotting. The canals and all their tributaries, the drains, were covered with green slime so thickly that the water was not visible. In the pools were dead animals, floating about, with every other description of animal decomposition. . . . The disease [yellow fever] would soon be upon us. It came before the end of May in 1853, and was supposed to be ineradicable. . . . The general had never heard of the yellow fever in the East; had heard of the plague, of cholera, and leprosy as terrible scourges. While this country was substantially exempt from them, why should we be cursed with the other? He had no works within reach, if there are any such works, to enlighten him on this topic.”

“He knew of one, and everybody knows of the same one—the Bible—but which he had not heard quoted as a work on diseases. In that were the books of Moses. Now, without discussing the question whether Moses was taught directly of

God as to the writing of his books and his instructions to the Israelites, as wholly one side of this examination, it is certain that Moses had all the learning of the Egyptians, which included all the learning of that time in the world, upon dealing with the diseases incident to large bodies of men gathered together in a hot climate. The general had read before, with admiration, Moses' careful provisions in regard to leprosy and against the plague, and also as to preserving the bodies of his people free from corruptions and unhealthiness, and enforcing them even, with the belief, on the people's part, that he would invoke divine power to enforce his provisions.

"The general observed that while Moses seemed to take no care as to diseases which might arise from miasma from decaying vegetable matter, and while nothing is said of that peculiar fever which we know coming to us from such matter, yet that Moses enforced the most thorough, careful, and minute cleanliness in regard to all dead or decaying animal matter, of every description, of which he used large quantities. The altars blazed with continual fires, upon which were placed, as expiation for all offenses, descending even to trespass, parts of animals, large and small, from the bullock to the turtle-dove, of which the fires consumed upon the altar very small portions; and other not very large portions were devoted to the sustenance of Aaron and the sons of the priesthood. Moses, over and over and over again,

requires every day that the carcass, the offal, the dung, and refuse parts of all animals sacrificed, be carried without the camp and there burned up, and the ashes even be buried.* And the same imperative orders were given in regard to every part of the animal that was not burned on the altar or eaten as food by the children of Aaron.

“And, it is wonderful to observe, the most stringent orders for the most unremitting care that every possible part, or excrementitious matter from the human body, should be, day by day, carefully buried, and every Israelite was armed with an implement for that purpose.† Not only this, but every exhalation from a dead body of any sort was treated as ‘uncleanness;’ and whoever touched anything dead, or had any dead matter issue from himself partaking of blood, should wash himself with water, and thereafter not ‘come into camp till evening.’ So much and so great care was taken, that not a microbe of putrefying flesh, and especially human flesh, should taint the pure air of Palestine or even the wilderness. So Moses had neither typhus fever, cholera, nor plague, not inflicted by the Lord for punishment, among the children of Israel during a forty years’ march. By feeding his people substantially on manna, a purely vegetable product, the leprosy was gradually worked out of them.”

* Leviticus iv, 11-12.

† Deuteronomy xxiii, 10-13. *Vide* Deuteronomy and Numbers *passim*.

It was thus, by following the instructions of Moses, that General Butler carried the city of New Orleans and his great army through the year 1862 without a single case of yellow fever. But in keeping before the people in so many ways the idea of cleanliness and uncleanness, Moses had in view something far deeper and more significant than the health of the camp, great as that must have been. His ideal of human perfection was a clean or pure soul in a healthy body, and we do not see how he could have reached that point in any way except the one he adopted. So much pure light, and an *essential element of religion*, comes to us, from a remote antiquity, through the Old Testament.

§ 6. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MOUNT SINAI.

During their long servitude of four hundred years the Hebrews became familiar with all the various forms of Egyptian idolatrous worship, and were no doubt, to a large extent, brought under its influence. How degrading must their conceptions have been of the Deity, having all their life witnessed the worship of cats, dogs, horned cattle, the crocodile, garlicks, leeks, and onions! To remove these impressions, and convey to the people a proper conception of the God they were to worship, was a matter of the first importance. How could it be done? Talk to them of truth, justice, holiness, purity, righteousness, omniscience, omnipotence, and ubiquity, as divine attributes,

and nothing you said would be understood. In some way their mind must be reached through their senses, if at all. What can be done? Let the trumpet, the thunder, the lightning, the shaking earth, the "Voice," and the terror of Mount Sinai answer. The people were encamped some distance from the mount, and not allowed to approach it; as a preparatory service they went through the most careful processes of purification, and so marvelous was the manifestation of the divine power and glory that even Moses said: "I do exceedingly fear and quake." In the midst of this visible scene of awful grandeur the Ten Commandments, the roots of all moral law, were delivered to the people. What were the gods of Egypt compared to the God of Mount Sinai? And there they were taught that this was the God who, in the beginning, created the heavens and the earth. Hence there could be but one God. Thus it is that from the far-away, hazy past, in connection with the infancy of a nation, there comes to us through the Old Testament, a blaze of light in regard to the most fundamental element of religion, a knowledge of the one, the great, the holy, and the mighty God. This one fact in importance surpasses all that we can learn from the mound-builders a thousand-fold.

§ 7. THE DECALOGUE.

Again, as we look back through the shadowy past to the infancy of the Hebrew nation, we meet towering up before us, in its own peculiar gran-

deur, a complete and perfect code of moral laws. The renowned jurisprudence of Rome was the result of the study and experience of an empire during more than one thousand years; and even then, in its moral features, it was far inferior to that which Moses delivered to his people in the wilderness. This is a fact which no science or philosophy can explain. Nations are all the time borrowing laws from each other; but there was no nation on the earth from which Moses could have borrowed the Decalogue. It either sprang up out of the desert, or it was a gift, as it professes to be, from heaven. Here is a code in which may be seen all the elements of government, human and divine. First of all, the Creator is enthroned as the supreme power and authority, and man's relation to him clearly defined; then man's relation to his brother man is set forth, the civil, marital, parental, and filial relations included. Such a moral code in that age of the world was out of all proportions to the attainments of the people; it was like a beacon-light set up in the distance before them, towards which they were to advance as rapidly as possible. The point which we wish to make emphatic is, that the morals of this code are the morals of the Gospel of Christ. As the ages of the past have found in it no flaw, nor made any addition or improvement, we may expect it will remain as it is in all time to come, an expression of the moral constitution of nature. Its perfection, when deliv-

ered, may be taken as the seal of its divine origin. In its adaptations it is suited to all nations, to every individual, and to all ages. In its unchangeableness it partakes of the nature of physical substances—gold, silver, iron. Time makes no improvements, and calls for no changes.

§ 8. THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT.

If we go back from Moses some five hundred years, we come to Abraham, the tap-root of the Jewish nation. The covenant of grace made with him, recorded in Genesis, chapters twelve to eighteen, considered in connection with the exposition given of it by the apostle Paul, is probably the most remarkable document that was ever written. God said to Abraham: "Walk thou before me, and be thou perfect, and I will make a covenant with thee, and with thy seed after thee." And then follows a specification of the blessings promised. This covenant was ever regarded as the constitution of their nation by the Jews; but, according to the interpretation given to it by St. Paul, it contained all the seed-thoughts of the Gospel of Christ. There is no spiritual blessing that man can enjoy, either in this world or the next, that is not embraced in that covenant. The whole of human duty is included in the command, "Walk thou before me, and be thou perfect;" and the highest blessedness flows from the promise, "I will be thy God, and ye shall be my people." If it required an Infinite Creator to put, poten-

tially, an oak into an acorn, no being less wise could have included the wonderful scheme of redemption as developed in the Gospel of Christ into the few words that were spoken to Abraham. So bright a light was this covenant to Abraham that, it is said, he saw in it the day of Christ, and was glad.

Here, then, through the Old Testament, we behold another beacon-light which, for thousands of years, did much to dispel the darkness from the infancy of mankind; and it is a satisfaction to know that the light which shone around his cradle is the same, only its splendor is enlarged, which now illuminates the high noon of his existence.

This line of thought might be still further extended; but the items above specified clearly identify the religion of the Old Testament with the religion of the New and with the religion of nature. Our argument contemplates no more. Whilst so much is clear, should the skeptic affirm that there is much in the Old Testament that is unusual—outside of our experience, strange and incomprehensible—we should admit the truth of his statement. Should he demand an explanation of these things as a prerequisite to faith, we should demand that he reproduce the age of Moses, with all its peculiarities, in Egypt and in the Wilderness, with the transitions and reconstructions which were everywhere going on. Then we should be able to see isolated facts in their

connections with cause, reason, and effects; and, in most cases, further explanation would not be necessary.

Who denies the existence of the ancient civilization of Egypt, or of Central America, Peru, Mexico, and the Ohio Valley, because much of what remains is incomprehensible? The demands of the *skeptic are without reason, and they carry no force.*

The basal principles of religion are the same always and everywhere, and they can not change; but humanity, society, and governments, ever growing, developing, or deteriorating, are subject to constant change. Authors thoughtlessly, and of course flippantly, talk of different religions—Freeman Clarke runs the number up as high as ten—but the truth is, there is at base but one religion. The fact that that religion may take on numerous forms, and find with different people and under different circumstances a variety of expressions, does not multiply the all-enduring and unchanging root, the obedience of love to God and the service of love to man. In Jewish history we may see the elements of the most unchangeable stability in the midst of changes many and extreme. The essential, the basal, the enduring of the Mosaic Institute, has come down to us, and is fundamental in Christianity. Thus the Old Testament, the New Testament, and nature, as three different witnesses, teach the same lessons.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE CHURCH, THEOLOGY, OR RELIGION?

WE are in hopes that when this region of thought comes to be further examined, it may lead to some common ground on which followers of science on the one hand, and of revealed religion on the other, may meet together, and recognize each other's claims, without any sacrifice of the spirit of independence or any diminution of self-respect.—TAIT.

§ I. THE INDEFINITE AIM OF INFIDEL WARFARE.

The progress of knowledge has often been greatly impeded by the reckless intrusiveness and bold assumptions of both scientific and theological writers. The battles fought along the line where Church and academy meet and lap upon each other, have been many, and often the contending forces have been ruthless invaders. Often the Church has regarded herself as the depository of all truth and the interpreter of all human interests, in reference to both this world and the world to come. The presumption that there should be any science or philosophy, any social, political, or physical interest, in regard to which the Bible was not an authority, has been treated as irreverent, if not wicked and blasphemous. In early times, scholarly converts from heathenism brought a portion of their erudition into the Church as

established truth, but nothing of the kind could be tolerated unless incorporated with theology. Christ was not only regarded as the King of all kings and of all kingdoms, but Christianity was held to be all-embracing; and hence ecclesiasticism was compelled to push out its lines in all directions, that every earthly and heavenly interest might be included in it.

As a consequence of this illegitimate claim, theology for some centuries in Europe, like an incubus, rested upon the science of anatomy, physiology, chemistry, and medicine, till the untrammelled Arabs swept the barriers away—not only by their invading armies, but by their superior scholarship. Theology became a monstrous growth, and religion mostly fled from its presence. The Dark Ages were brought upon the world quite as much by a corrupt theology, as by a morally apostate Church.

It can not be denied that the Church and science—also, theology and science—have often been in deadly conflict, but the really important question is this: Has ever religion, *per se*, and infidelity been at war? What is religion? It is the obedience of love to God and the service of love to man. What is science? It is a knowledge and study of God's works. The graphic account which Dr. Draper has given of the conflict between religion and science never occurred; and the title of his book should have been: "History of the Conflict between a Mongrel Theology and an Over-

grown Church on the One Hand, and Science on the Other."

The Church has often been in the wrong, and science as frequently has made its mistakes—collision has been the result; but we have yet to meet an assault made directly upon religion itself. There is a class of theologians and a class of philosophers which seem to be constitutionally opposed to each other. Each looks upon the other's field of thought as a rival; or, rather, neither class is sure of its own footing, and stands in constant fear of a successful invasion from the other. These are the mischief-makers in the world of polemics, and it must be confessed that they do much harm. Throw out what Ingersoll has said against Church corruptions and an overgrown theology, and there would not be much left of his diatribes.

There is before the world a class of men whose example ought to be all-potent in correcting the follies of one-sided bigots, whether found in the ranks of the theologians or scientists. Galileo, Copernicus, Tycho Brahe, Kepler, Newton, Faraday, Maxwell, Dana, Winchell, Dawson, are but a few of the great names which are equally potent in the religious and scientific world. They find the same God in the laboratory and at the altar; they find him in his works and in his Word. They have reached the lofty height to which they have attained, only by keeping separate and using both wings of thought.

§ 2. THE PROPER RELATION OF CHURCH, THEOLOGY, AND RELIGION TO EACH OTHER.

The word *Church* has often signified an ecclesiastical despotism, and the word *theology* has stood for an iron-clad, philosophico-theological expression of *whatever* would give power to this Church; and as there was neither use nor room for religion, the outcome has been corruption and wrong. When the world shall be blest with much religion, a moderate but adequate supply of theology, and still less of ecclesiastical machinery, the conflict between science and religion will mostly cease. In this connection, special attention may be given to theology and to its liability to abuse. When defined as the logical and systematic expression of the basal elements of religion, natural and revealed, no objection will be made to it. As a body of truth it is rooted in both God and man, complete in itself, and independent of every other system of truth. It is purest and best when, in its own light, it stands alone, unmodified by any system of speculative thought. In the general realm of truth it has a place and character exclusively its own, which the terms *God*, *man*, *character*, and *destiny* designate with sufficient precision.

§ 3. THEOLOGY, AS DISTINGUISHED FROM THE GOSPEL.

The sacred Scriptures contain all the elements of theology, but it is the student's business to col-

late them and reduce them to systematic form. The gospel, as given to us by Christ and his apostles, is like the rose in full bloom, basking in the sun, or jeweled by the dews of the night, enriching the air with its fragrance, and giving its beauty to the world; theology is like the rose plucked from its stem, and subjected to the destructive analysis of the botanist. In yielding up to the observer its scientific elements, the flower, like the mother of Cæsar, is doomed to part with its life.

Valuable as theology may be to the philosophical thinker, it is the living, glowing gospel, which should be preached from the pulpit as spiritual food for hungry, perishing men. The sermons of the Vine, of the Good Shepherd, the Prodigal Son, as found in the Scriptures, are of surpassing beauty, but they will not bear the touch of analysis and logic. The solid timbers of theology may constitute the frame-work of preaching, but they should be so clothed with the practical spiritualities of the gospel that, like the bones of a living body, they can be seen only by dissection. The abstract, skeleton-like elements of theology should be taken for only what they *profess to be*, and never for the *religion* of Christ.

We expose theology to contempt by eliminating the divine and spiritual elements, for then only the intellectual is left, and at once we are transported into another realm—the Siberian wastes of pure rationalism. Christianity with Christ left out, does not commend itself to anybody. The

narrow and uncertain ways of speculative philosophy can not be used as the fundamental elements of a religion revealed from heaven. It is the philosopher, and not the theologian, who is likely to make this mistake. As a psychologist or metaphysician he is not able to work out his theories on a natural basis, or with purely scientific elements, and to help him through, he calls in the aid of the supernatural and divine. A personal God, with his attributes and titles, is discarded by being in language and thought undeified and reduced to an extreme abstraction, and then used as a metaphysical factor, denominated the "infinite," the "absolute," or the "unconditioned." It matters not which term is used, the meaning is the same, and neither expresses necessarily a divine attribute. The term "infinite," when applied to time and space, means unlimited—that is, the human mind can neither grasp it nor put limits to it—but the term *divine* necessarily expresses an attribute of the Godhead, and is unmanageable as a factor in any system of metaphysics.

§ 4. THEOLOGY IN THE FORM OF PHILOSOPHY LOSES ITS TRUE CHARACTER.

The philosophy which is thus substituted for theology is monistic, and divides the speculative world into two schools of thought. The one regards matter as the only substance in the universe; hence, every substance known to man, even his own consciousness, is interpreted by me-

chanical and physical law. The other school regards the one substance as spirit, and then this "infinite" and its "activities" constitute the universe. In both systems theology makes a sorry appearance, and excites only contempt. In a material universe, physical law determines human conduct as absolutely as it does the waterfall, and renders moral action impossible. Idealism, in holding that all phenomena are the "activities" of the "infinite," also leaves no room for the existence of a moral world. Thus we see that the mixing of theology with speculative philosophy eliminates from it the divine, the moral, and the spiritual elements, and nothing is left but a theory of metaphysics at war with a purely physical conception of the universe. Idealism starts with one all-embracing infinite, annihilates time and space, and then recognizes nothing but the activities of this infinite. No thinker who has any respect for the teachings of the Scriptures, or for the voice of common sense, should admit that these and kindred speculations have any kinship whatever with either theology or religious truth. As the terms "infinite" and "absolute" are mere factors in an argument logically connected with other factors, they should be allowed to pass as such, and for nothing more. It has ever been so easy for speculative writers to let go their hold of the divine personality in God and the spiritual in man, and sink down into the realm of speculative reason and logic, that theol-

ogy as well as philosophy has greatly suffered from this source, and they are never free from danger. When standing isolated, alone, asserting its own right to be, dressed in the garb of the infinite, confident of its own inherent, unconquerable strength, theology obstructs no line of thought; it embraces the basal elements of religion, and commands the highest respect.

§ 5. THEOLOGY SHOULD BE KEPT WITHIN ITS OWN SACRED LIMITS.

Theology has often been made to suffer damage and to give offense by being pushed out into every conceivable field of thought, as if all questions must be adjudged by its authority. Out of this chimera has arisen all the "harmonies" and "reconciliations" with which the world is burdened in regard to "science and revelation." One of the first of these efforts occurred about five centuries ago. The telescope had begun to explore the heavens, and it was found that moons were moving around Jupiter. Then the question was raised in regard to their number. On the instant the reconciler of "science and revelation" steps to the front with this reply: "Of course there must be twelve, because there were twelve apostles." Another great question had to be settled—the number of primary planets. A professor in the University of Padua, agreeably to the spirit of the times, rendered the following answer: "As there are only seven metals and

seven days in the week, seven Churches of Asia and seven apertures in man's head, there could be only seven planets." The theologian and scientist seem to have been equally sincere and silly in their attempts to glorify God by preserving the unity and symmetry of the different parts and interests of the universe. What Lotze calls the mind's "craving" for unity, and its itching for harmony, never received a more rational and complete gratification than in these instances.

The attempts which have been made to settle all questions of astronomy, geology, biology, psychology, etc., in the light of the Scriptures, or, rather, certain interpretations of Scripture, has often subjected religion to much contempt. It is enough to make one's skin crawl, from his head to his toes, to hear a minister from the pulpit account for the existence of the bones—whole skeletons of monstrous animals, in swamps and beaver-meadows—and countless fossils of extinct genera in our rocks, by saying that God created and put them there. The fact is, the sciences—mathematics, astronomy, geology, anatomy, and psychology, etc.—must speak for themselves; and if they are allowed that privilege, they will speak out the truth that is in them, and they can speak nothing else; and, in the interest of truth, we will add that whilst they, or any one of them, have the floor, let theology maintain a respectful and self-respecting silence.

§ 6. THE RELATION OF THEOLOGY TO PSYCHOLOGY.

As theology is rooted in both God and man, its relation to psychology is very intimate, and it may make itself very offensive and suffer great injury by attempting to reduce both sciences to one. This danger arises from the lazy inclination of the mind to simplify and make easy its studies by reducing different lines of thought to unity, or by making one ingulf another. The fact is, there is a border-land which is common to both lines of thought, and each is strongly tempted to invade the territory of the other. Theology recognizes in man intellect, will, and an emotional nature, especially conscience, but simply in their moral relations. As a result of this contiguity of thought, the rationalistic psychologist, led on by his "craving for unity," is inclined to absorb theology in his science; and, on the other hand, the theologian attempts to occupy the entire ground, that he may preserve the "harmony of science and religion." In both instances the compound of compounds thus formed is a woful distortion of both systems of truth. The better way would be to develop the science of psychology by introspection out of the elements of the mind, without the least regard to any other science. Then, isolated, alone, shining in its own light, and unmodified or distorted by anything foreign to it, we shall be able to see the mind as it is. How it came to be, or what its destiny, are questions

which need not be raised. As the essence of mind lies wholly beyond our reach, the psychologist may begin his studies with the inquiry, What are its powers? What are their relations to each other and to the sense organs? And the more fully he studies mind as it is in the light of his own consciousness, *and nothing else*, the clearer and more correct will be his conception of its properties and powers.

The expression, "the physiology of mind," is about as intelligent a conception of it as the expression "the square of a circle," or "the circle of a triangle," would be in geometry. In fact we can see nothing distinctly only as it is made to stand forth alone, away from the shadow of other things, and appear in its own light. Theology should receive the same mode of treatment, and nothing should be permitted to mar its distinctive individuality. Then, when we have the two sciences fully in hand, it will be very proper, by comparison and contrast, to examine the relation they sustain to each other. An important inquiry will be, Do they, as separate and independent witnesses, testify to the same truth when occupying common ground? Only in this one particular should we desire coalescence, or unity or harmony, between theology and psychology.

But suppose we follow the fashion of the times, and engage in the work of reconciliation, what will be the necessary outcome? If we make pure

psychology the standard of truth, then theology must be cramped and stretched, and warped and twisted in a thousand ways—mangled, in fact, beyond recognition—to coalesce or harmonize with it, and psychology left to stand alone as the embodiment of both. Or if theology is made the standard of truth, then psychology must be subjected to like violence, that unity or agreement may be effected. Or if both sciences are so modified that they will be able to blend and occupy common ground, then the compound will form a nameless fiction.

If we allow theology to swallow up psychology, then ultimately, under the pressure of a remorseless logic, God only will be recognized, and man's individuality will disappear. In his place we shall have, as the universe, the thought and activity of the Infinite with the capital "I" discarded. If, in this process, we take a step further, and, with Descartes, include matter or extension as a part of nature, then we land in the Pantheism of Spinoza, a form of Atheism. Further than this the harmonizing process can not be carried.

§ 7. WHAT MAY BE LEARNED FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF THE PAST.

Let it be remembered that against religion, which is the love of God and man, there is really no war. There is none for the reason that it contains nothing against which a reasonable war-

fare can be waged. But as much can not be said of the Church and theology. Ecclesiastical history between the sixth and the sixteenth century is largely composed of the struggle made by the Church to settle, by Scripture texts, questions of geography, astronomy, chemistry, anatomy, mathematics, medicine, and even the most palpable facts of history. The theology of the times did not embrace or represent *religion* or *truth* of *any kind*, and in its most active features it was a disgrace and a curse to humanity. Religion was made odious to millions of people, as is the case now, because it was burdened by Church corruptions and theological deformities. Theology decided that Roger Bacon was a bad man, not because he did not love God, but because he loved to study his works; and then the Church shut him up in prison, to the blushing disgrace of religion. His case is only one of thousands of the same kind that might be mentioned.

During the last three centuries theology has learned that it was illegitimate and impossible to control or settle questions of science, and that enterprise has been thoroughly abandoned; but there is abroad a tendency that is quite as fatal to its simplicity and purity. Whenever a plausible system of speculative philosophy is given to the world, theology, in the person of its friends, feels constrained to make the acquaintance of the newcomer, and put on such airs as will be sure to establish friendly relations with it. By thus pat-

ronizing a stranger of unknown character, whose stay may be transient, it has often suffered a loss of dignity and reputation. The example of Augustine has been imitated in every age since his time. Before becoming a Christian he was thoroughly versed in Greek philosophy, and the fatalism it taught he had heartily embraced. The most far-reaching and enduring labor of his life was his successful attempt to bring theology into harmony with the doctrine of necessity. If at any point he failed, the deficiency was supplied at a later day by John Calvin. As a consequence, for more than one thousand years the beautiful form of religion was torn and tortured by decrees, election, foreordination, predestination, effectual calling, perseverance, vessels of wrath, vessels of glory, and such an arbitrary combination of love and hate as have caused millions of people to stand aghast and tremble, till thousands have fled for refuge to some form of infidelity. How different would have been the history of the Church had theology been content to occupy its own ground and let speculative philosophy alone! Or if, in some of its Protean forms, speculative philosophy is worth fighting, let us not take the ark of God into the field, but make the attack with such weapons as can be captured from the enemy. Every system of thought contains within itself the elements of both its strength and weakness; hence neither attack nor support from without can produce but little effect. If the theory of evo-

lution, or materialism, is a true interpretation of the facts and laws of nature, it can not be overthrown; if not, it will ultimately fall of its own weight. In neither its defense nor in the attacks made upon it has theology any concern. All along the line where religion and what is true in evolution come into contact, we have not a doubt that there will be agreement in the lessons taught; and away from that line the voice of theology need not be heard.

Let us remember that religion is the love of God and man; that theology is a guardian, standing over it for the defense of its fundamental elements; that the Church is an agency to make religion effective; that their sphere of activity is the realm of the divine, the intellectual, and the spiritual *in man*, and their purity will be easily preserved. As there is nothing in the universe that can come up and share with religion these heights, so it should refuse to go down for the sake of being brought into harmony with any system of speculative thought.

Religion is the basal element, and its influence should be practically all-pervading in the kingdom of Christ. Theology, in structure and tendency, should always have been a simple fortress to religion—the *practice* of love to God and man. Neither the Church nor theology should have given its sanction to any act, or custom, or practice which was not in harmony with religion and an honor to it. Had there been, during the Dark

Ages, far less of theology and ecclesiasticism, and far more of religion, the history of the world would have been different from what it is, and far more honorable to man.

When Church, theology, religion, and each separate science have their own place, stand forth in their own individuality and proper relations, like the different chords of the violin, then the harmony will be perfect, the music sweet, and the world will yield to its charms—the kingdoms of this world will speedily become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ.

CONCLUSION.

By the expression, "constitution of nature," we intend to designate the substance and laws of the physical world, the realm of life, and the laws by which it is governed; and the entire domain of humanity with its laws, and especially the relations of the parts to the whole, to each other, forming a harmonious world. The distinct parts of nature have, *per se*, nothing in common, and yet they are so nicely correlated to each other as to be subject to a common constitution, resulting in an all-comprehensive government. Man, as the head of creation, affords us a conspicuous example of this feature of nature. In the structure of his body matter, life, and mind are beautifully and harmoniously associated, though the three substances are utterly unlike each other.

In taking leave of the theme which, for nearly a year, has been the toil and delight of such hours as we could command from other duties, we feel inclined to cast a backward glance over nature's vast realm, and note some of the religious elements which stand out conspicuously in its constitution, and thus fix attention upon a line of thought which, in our judgment, will, when fully developed, go far toward ruling Atheism outside

the pale of debatable subjects. As a pioneer passes through a wilderness, blazing trees here and there, and thus indicates to such as may follow the route he has taken, so we claim only to have called attention to some features of nature, a more full and lucid development of which will leave infidelity no standing-ground whatever. Some of the difficulties encountered may not be settled beyond further controversy; but they have not been minimized nor avoided. We have been bold to take positions which seemed to us to be of the first importance, that have not, so far as we know, in form, till now, been pressed into the service of Christianity. It is particularly to these that we would call special attention.

1. It has seemed good to us to classify man as a part of nature, and to regard the laws of his being as a conspicuous element in the constitution of nature.

If the universe is composed of Creator and created, of the supernatural and the natural, then man's place is easily determined. He may hold the honors of the headship of nature, and still form a part of it; and as an object of study, humanity constitutes its most instructive part. The philosopher who looks upon nature as composed exclusively of the physical worlds, needlessly impoverishes his theme by leaving out of it its highest and most important features—the vital, the intellectual, the spiritual, and the moral. Man can not be classified as divine; and if denied a

place in nature, as a part of it, he is left isolated and alone—a position the facts will not warrant. As a part of nature he is related to every other part; and as a created being—created in the image of his Maker—he is related to the Infinite One.

Man unquestionably possesses a capacity for religion, and *this capacity must be recognized as an element in the constitution of nature.* The proof of this fact stands out as conspicuously on the face of history as on the page of revelation. The doctrines of Christianity are given to develop, direct, and regulate the religious element found in humanity as a part of nature. Without the latter, the former would be of no value; for it would have no more application to man than to a bird or a stone. Neither Brahmanism, nor Buddhism, nor Christianity, nor any other form or expression of religion, could have ever obtained a footing on the earth had not the religious element been a part of the constitution of human nature. Poets and musicians have had great influence in the world because a measure of the poetic and musical faculties is found in every human soul. An extreme crank finds sympathy nowhere, as he touches no chord of nature, and stands isolated and alone, an object of wonder or pity. All forms of religion owe their success to the fact that they touch the deepest, the strongest, and the most active springs in nature. Strike out of human history its religious development, and the residue

would present us quite a different being; and existing facts abundantly demonstrate that as the force of the religious principle diminishes among a people, the more brutal and degraded they become. Religion is really the most elevating and broadening element of power the constitution of nature contains. We may see this not only as a fact, but we may see the reasons for it, inasmuch as it touches the whole man, God and eternity.

2. In the undeniable fact that man, as a part of nature, without the lapse or respite of a moment, is under moral government, an infinite moral Governor is proclaimed.

All along the pathway of life, man finds himself, at every step, in the presence of right and wrong, and *necessity* is laid upon him to refuse the one and accept the other. He *must* do the right or do the wrong. Between right and wrong the universe furnishes no neutral ground. To refuse or to avoid the right is *to do* a positive wrong. This simple truth is the core of religion; it goes down into the depths of divine government, and no weightier consideration can occupy the mind of man.

The moral government which each man is conscious touches directly himself, also touches in like manner every other intelligence in the domain of the Almighty. Man's conscience thus serves as a key by which he can unlock the moral department of the universe. Man can not get away from himself, and the right or wrong of his life becomes a

part of his being. Such is the constitution of his nature, and it is in harmony with the whole.

Since man in fact has violated the moral law of the universe, he has brought himself under the law of guilt and condemnation. Of his moral condition, in this respect, he is *as conscious* as he is of existence. Every thought of sin is the pressure upon him of a moral government, whose Governor must be all-seeing and infinite. In this condition moral law, or the constitution of nature, can render him no help, for he sustains to it the relation of antagonist. He is out of harmony and in a state of collision with the world he lives in.

In the gospel, the religious element—found, also, in nature—becomes invested anew with the power of the Author of nature. The object is its restoration to man, and his readjustment to the system of nature. Christianity was given to repair the breach which had been made by transgression. The gospel, invested with the Divine Spirit, transcends nature, for its work is to restore and rebuild the religious element in the nature of man. Christianity is a supplementary creation, devised to save from inevitable ruin the victims of transgression—such as would avail themselves of its benefits.

3. In the discussion of the constitution of nature we have frequently had occasion to notice the pregnant fact that it does not contain the elements of error or sin or evil of any kind.

Every affirmative element of nature that is

known, in every department—whether of matter, life, or mind—is good. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that evil, on an immense scale, exists in the world; but who can mention an evil which is not the result of the absence of some positive and possible good? An error is simply the absence of the truth in the case. The truth exists as a positive element and as a part of nature. Bring forward the truth, and the error, with all its train of evils, will depart. Only in the absence of some truth is an error even conceivable. Death is but the vacuum left where life has been. Life is the reality—the positive existence—a part of the universe; death is but a name for the nonentity which characterizes its absence. These particulars will serve to illustrate what we mean by the absence of evil from the constitution of nature as a whole.

If, then, the constitution of nature is good, creation as a whole is a work of benevolence. Much will be gained by the conception of evil as not an affirmative, positive reality—a part of nature—but as an incident resulting from the absence of a good that was available. Where there is wealth there is no poverty; where there is bread there is no hunger; and to empty the world of its evils we have only to fill it with good.

The absence of positive evil and the presence of a universe of affirmative good, proclaims, both negatively and positively, with the greatest possible emphasis, the existence of an infinite, beneficent Creator and Governor. This fact, in the

language of Christianity, takes the form of "Our Father, which art in heaven," "The hairs of your head are numbered," "He notices the falling of the sparrow," "He hears the young ravens when they cry," and "Sends his rain on the just and the unjust." The constitution of nature and the Christian system differ on this point only in their mode of expression. The basal facts—the essential thing in the case—are the same in both representations. If this position holds, the heaviest timbers in the citadel of Atheism are swept away.

4. In the study of the constitution of nature we have been led, by unquestionable facts, to recognize the freedom or self-directive action of the will, and in all other respects the prevalence of the law of necessity.

We do not discount but exalt the character of God in saying that he is subject to the action of this law. He is necessarily divine, almighty, self-existent, and eternal. To affirm that God can not lie, or work an absurdity, is not, in any proper sense, to put limits upon his power; for such limitation is really an affirmative excellency, an element of perfection. In the character of God the right is so perfectly right that he can not do wrong; his truth is so absolutely true that the possibility of falsehood is excluded. What is this but saying that the essence or nature of God is unchangeable and perfect?

The constitution of nature, as a vast, symmet-

rical whole, is a unit, and, because perfect in every part, any change is impossible.* Each part is correlated to every other part of the vast structure. All apparent physical evils are but transient incidents in the operation of laws which are absolutely perfect, and to find fault with them—trifles as compared with the greatness of the whole—is unworthy of a thoughtful, candid mind. The constitution of nature must be universal, touching every atom and every energy in the universe, or it can not exist at all. Each department and each item must be subordinate to the other departments, that the beauty and harmony of the whole may be realized.

The benefits resulting from the law of necessity may be seen if we will reflect upon what the world would be if everything came about in a hap-hazard way. Suppose the sun rose at all hours, giving us days and nights of uncertain length; that the seasons were so that we could not tell which one would come next; that the same seed would produce any kind of harvest; and that like uncertainty and confusion everywhere prevailed,—what sort of a world would this be? And what would we think of its creator and governor? The law of necessity, in its own proper realm, we as fully recognized in Christianity as in nature; and may it not be taken as an expression of benevolent design? The exception of the will to this law makes this a moral world.

5. The most difficult and important question

we have been required to handle is the relation God sustains to the reign of law. .

Any conception of God, whether idealistic, pantheistic, or theological, which makes him the only energy in the universe, at the same time makes him the author of sin, and must be instantly rejected; and then, at the same moment, we must look upon the world as having God for its governor, though at the same time it is under the reign of law. The idealist, in representing us as putting God "outside" of the universe, betrays the fact that his conceptions of God are thoroughly materialistic; that God is subject to the control of space relations. He can conceive of none but an *inside* God; that is, of an infinite—he does not say what, hence anything—whose interior activities give us the appearance of a universe—only that, and nothing more. But we can not conceive God as God, and, at the same time, regard him as a part of the world he has made or makes.

It is clear to us that the constitution of nature is a unit; that its parts, though infinite in number, are symmetrical and harmonious; that, as the product of Infinite Wisdom, it is perfect; and that as such no part can be changed without an injury to the whole. If such be the facts in the case, then the infidel's conception of a personal arbitrary government of God loses all its force. We can not believe that nature established its own laws, nor that its laws are self-

sustaining. All that we can conceive of wisdom and power is revealed to us through nature; and should any one affirm that God was present, and in some way, utterly inconceivable, incorporate (relatively, not organically), in the laws and constitution of the universe, we should find no fault with the idea nor with the language in which it was expressed. Such incorporation in law may be analogous to the incarnation.

We keep before us the infinite realm of reality, judge each part in its relation to the whole, and shall refrain from finding fault with what is till we can suggest improvement. If change is to be made, it must be done in accordance with law, and with due reference to its bearing upon all other things. More than half the battle with Atheism is to be fought out on this ground. We are confident that our position is correct, though a further exposition of it may be necessary to satisfy all minds. After all, is it not wise to confess that God's relation to law is a question which is placed beyond the reach of our faculties? Mind in some particulars governs the body; but *how*, no philosophy can explain. Why, then, should we be asked to show the adjustment of God's relation to the universe?

6. In no one particular does the religious element of the constitution of nature and of Christianity meet and blend into one result more completely than in the nature of virtue and outcome of character.

It is clearly written on every page of nature that conformity to law, physical, mental, moral, spiritual, and divine, secures to man the highest blessedness that it is possible for him to enjoy, and revelation teaches that "to fear God and keep his commandments is the whole duty of man." Human experience in the actual affairs of life is the best proof we can have of the truthfulness or falsity of these representations. It will not be denied that there is much of suffering in this world, and the greater part of it is kept locked up in the human heart, and never sees the light of day. What is the cause and origin of this suffering? Some of it may spring from virtue. A noble father suffers all the more over the profligacy of the son because he is noble. The good will grieve for the vile, when the vile care nothing for their own vileness. But the pains and tears of virtue are a sweet relief. Whence the bitterness, the wormwood, the gall, the remorse, and the despair which make up largely the sufferings of earth? In regard to this whole field of human experience, nature and the Bible teach the same thing, and mutually interpret and enlarge each other's meaning. The basal element of religion is moral, involving the spiritual, and the beginning of character we see here is capable of developing, as it unfolds into all that we can conceive heaven and hell to be. If some souls are happy and others wretched, if some are saved and others lost, it is because the same constitutional

law requires it. The same thing is the savor of life unto life to one class, and of death unto death to the opposite class, as the rain which extinguishes the blaze will also make the flowers bloom. The Atheistic argument, therefore, which affirms that, if a God exist, he must arbitrarily fill the cup of one with bitterness, and another with bliss, disappears. Both nature and the Bible proclaim it false. That, in the main and long run, happiness and honor and glory are the outcome of character formed in obedience to law, and wretchedness and shame and degradation are also the outcome of character formed in disobedience to law, both nature and Christianity declare; hence the testimony of both must be true.

The six great truths which we have mentioned embrace all the essential elements of practical Christianity. Standing out as they do on the face of nature as conspicuously as any other feature of it, and most fully and clearly expressed in the written Word, we do not see how their truthfulness can be denied. What is truth? Is it not reality? And what can be real if not the palpable things of nature? As these elements of religion are the observed realities of the world each one lives in, and of the whole universe, their truthfulness does not depend upon the authority of the Bible. Could it be shown that the Scriptures were not inspired; that miracles were not wrought by Christ as we understand them; that Moses did make mistakes, and that there have been inter-

polations in the New Testament, the fact would still remain, that nature and the Scriptures unite in teaching all the fundamental elements of religion. If Christianity is false, nature is also a lie.

Will it be denied that nature, at base, has a constitutional structure, or will it be urged that we have given to it a false interpretation? We have aimed to avoid all points whose truth was not self-evident, and we feel confident that no mistake has been made. Could the skeptic for one hour be put in possession of the sin-pardoning power of Christianity, he would then be in a position to pass judgment upon this subject. The true groundwork of faith is not the wisdom of man, but the power of God. This, as one of the essential elements of religion, is an important factor in the case, and the one who has it not is responsible for its absence.

INDEX.

A.

ABRAHAMIC COVENANT, the root of revealed religion, 330.
 Air, how formed, 148.
 Animal food, 167.
 Atheism not based on affirmative principles, 33; a system of denials, 34, 41; an attempt to fill a conscious vacuum in the mind, 35; the battle-ground of, 93; the outcome of Pantheism, 123; can exist only in the absence of the theory of government by law, 130; holds only degrading conceptions of humanity, 198; based on some scheme of necessity, 206.
 Atoms, the entity and individuality of matter, 23; belong to the "unseen universe," 23; of unknown essence, 23.
 Atonement, based on the principle of one thing created for another, 204.
 Antiquity, obscurity of, 317.

B.

BEING, essence of unknown, 27.
 Bible, not a creator but a revealer of existing truths, 309.
 Bowne, Professor, on "spiritual rubbish," 233.
 Butler, Bishop, his conception of man as a spirit entity, 241; on the inward constitution of character, 177.
 Butler, Hon. B. F., on the sanitary arrangements of Moses in the wilderness, 324.

C.

CONSTITUTION of nature, should be studied as a whole, 96, 192; because perfect, unchangeable, 356; pronounced "good" by its Creator, 160.
 Crime, being a violation of the constitution of nature, it is right and becoming that it be attended by misery, 161.

Character, its force obscured by the present mixed condition of things, 267; the basis of destiny good or bad, 183; the same as seen in the Bible and philosophy, 271; the outcome of character a heaven or a hell, 269, 272; as such its truth is admitted by the infidel, 288.
 Chalmers on the power of character as an element of the constitution of nature, 185; all forms of fatality a perversion of nature, 226; conscience as a part of the constitution of nature, 201.
 Christ as an interpreter of the religious element in nature, 292.
 Church, its invasion by science and the invader of science, 334.
 Cudworth on the doctrine of necessity, 334.

D.

DARWIN, was he an Atheist? 39.
 Descartes on the sovereignty of God, 222.
 Dick on the theological necessity, 228; on the foreordination of volitions, 239.
 Decalogue of divine origin, 328.
 Diderot on necessity, 211.

E.

ENERGY, infinite, what it would be if without wisdom, 25.
 Evil not a part of the constitution of nature, 26; the absence of a possible good, 27; origin of evil, 158; apparent, may be a real blessing, 176.
 Edwards on fatalism, 223; on God's relation to evil, 260.
 Emmons makes God the author of sin, 258.

G.

GOD, prevalence of the idea of, 21; humanity, as an oracle, proclaims his existence, 22; no part of the universe he created, 28; sole oc-

cupant of the divine realm, 28, 204; has left his impress on the things he created, 29; his relation to the things he made, 29, 179; God and nature compose the universe, 140; moral government of can not be escaped, 239.

H.

HINDU conception of God, 22.
Human body an expression of purpose, 25.
Humanity proclaims the existence of God, 35.
Humboldt, how he drifted into Atheism, 37.
Hell, the problem of, 161.
Hume on necessity, 212.

I.

INFINITE, the realm of, 22; must be a something, 24; as applied to time and space, 24.
Ingersoll, the representative Atheist, 46, characteristics of the man, 47; his acquisitions, 47; incapable of dealing with abstract truths, 55; has a scoffer of religion, 59; has no idea of nature governed by law, 60; the kind of a God he would worship, 63; his infidelity brings him no rest, 65; objects to nature and the Bible on the same ground, 66; assumes that if a God exists, he must be the author of all evil, 68; his superficial views, 78; utterly unqualified to judge of religion, 72; his arguments made up of mere fragments of truth, 76; himself a one-sided man, 78; the true spirit of inquiry lacking, 78; his suggestions for improving nature, 107, 108; his one advantage, 194; sample of his spirit, the victim of an unfortunate education, 258; his weak attempt at metaphysics, 286.
Intelligence in man appreciates intelligence in his Maker, 190.
Idealistic philosophy identical with fatalism, 230, 232.
Idealism refuted, 286.

K.

KANT, sensitiveness to the vastness of the universe, 22.

L.

LIFE a part of the created universe, 23; an element in the constitution of nature, 23; the root of a peculiar energy, 25; its correlations, 25; opinions of M. Pasteur, M. Dumas, etc., 171.
Law commensurate with the different departments of the universe, 178, 180; an expression of divine will and the nature of the thing governed, 30, 187; the wisdom and will of God incorporate in, 135; the relation of liberty to and its action in the formation of character, 183, 270; apparent irregularities only seeming, 186.
Law an expression of divine wisdom, 187.

M.

MAN, proper conception of, 241; no part of the mechanism of nature, 274; maker of his own destiny, 100; can be correctly understood only as viewed in connection with his Maker, 200; possesses the religious capacity, capable of growth, 39.
Materialism leads to Atheism, 208.
Moses, his policy to elevate the Hebrews, 323.
Mt. Sinai, its significance to the Hebrew, 327.
Matter, its constitution perfect, 112, 113; poisons no exception, 115; any change in any kind of matter would destroy the constitution of nature, 116; perverted views of matter, 117; interaction of different kinds of matter, 118; a self-centered source of energy, 120; incapable of self-organization, 164; fourteen kinds correlated to life, 164; of unknown essence, 165.
Mind belongs to the realm of ideas, 24; a self-directive agent, 245; acts in accordance with laws of its own substance, 245; its capacity for joy or woe, 265; susceptibility to change, 266.

N.

NATURE, misconceptions of its facts, 102; its laws to be distinguished from its phenomena, 121; its laws

and expressions of truth and reality, 128; religion an element in the constitution of nature, 297; man a part of nature, 291; unites with the Bible, and teaches the same lessons concerning man, God, and religion, 295; the first revelation, 297; unites as a witness to the truth of religion, 298; its testimony more than its analogy to religion, 300; testimony important only when it touches the realm of religion, 301; meets revelation in God and man, 309.

Nations incorporate in their institutions the spirit of different periods, 320; Jewish nation, origin of, 321; condition of the Hebrew mind at the time, 322.

P.

PERSON, no other definite conception of God can be formed in the mind, 27; should be studied in the light of philosophy and religion, 104.

Pantheism, what leads to it? 120.

Psychology, importance of a correct system of, 242; its elements reviewed, 240.

R.

RELIGION incorporated in the constitution of nature, 21; what it is, 29, 31; embraces the elements of law, 30; caricatured by the infidel, 282; distinguished from ecclesiasticism and theology, 333; all forms presuppose the existence of the religious faculty in man, 351; review of the argument, 349.

S.

SILICON, the part it acts in nature, 25.
Sin, God not its author, 260; its hazards rendered a revelation necessary, 247.

Secchi, his testimony as a naturalist, 30.

Spencer, Herbert, an agnostic, 44.
Spinoza on necessity, 216.

Sugar, a molecule of, a marvelous expression of divine wisdom and power, 145.

Suffering a means of mental and moral discipline, 175.

Scripture, its conception of man, 198, 199; perversions of, 179, 280, 283.

T.

THEOLOGY pressed into the service of Fatalism and Atheism, 220, 221; supported by the great names of Augustine, Calvin, Edwards, Dick, *et al.*, 223; as distinguished from the gospel and in alliance with philosophy, 338; pure only when independent, 340; closely related to psychology, 340; not to be used to decide scientific questions, 340.
Tyndall, Dr. John, his experience of Atheism, 36.

U.

UNIVERSE, not being divine, though infinite, no invasion of the realm of the Almighty, 122.

Upham, Professor, on the mind, 241.

V.

VIRTUE an element of nature and source of felicity, 153; happiness not subject to external environments, 154; may be the cause of suffering, 156, 173; can not be necessitated, 237; essence of, 254.

W.

WORLD, a revelation of its Creator, and display of energy, wisdom, and goodness, 24, 157.

Wisdom, creation a dictate of, 157; incorporate in instinct, 26.

Worship, tendency of humanity thereto, 34.

Will, man invested with the power of contrary choice, 153, 210; the ground of human responsibility, 237; an exposition of, 243; its perversion by a false psychology, 256; its responsibility, 261; relation to motives, 244.

Z.

ZEUS-PATER, Jupiter, the Heaven-father, God of the Greeks, 91.

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